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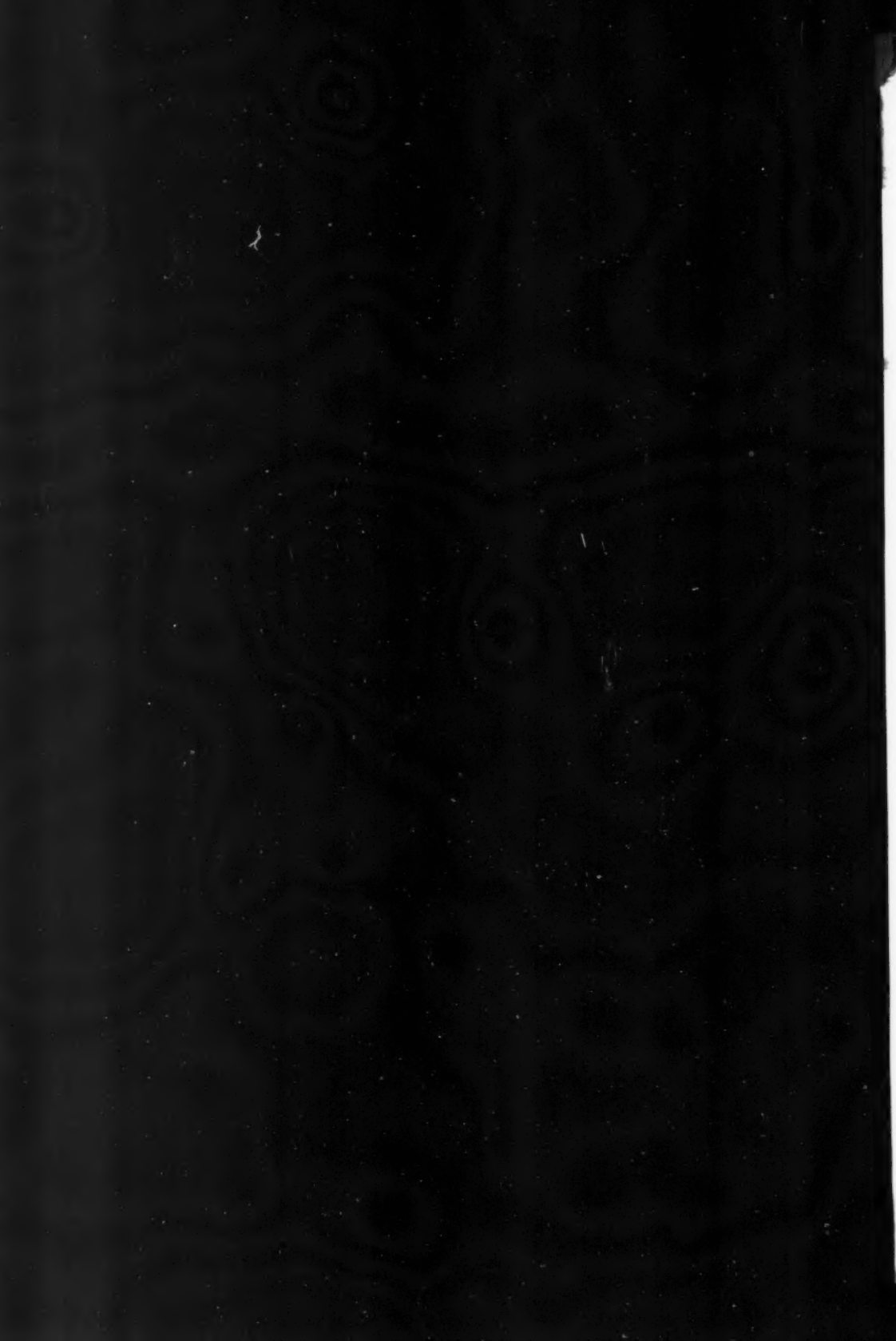
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LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

Fifth Series, }
Volume LXXXII. }

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{ From Beginning
Vol. CXCVII. }

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THE ARTIST'S LAST PICTURE.

ON the painter's easel stands
The latest picture from his hands.
The canvas shows a sunset glow
Reflected in the lake below,
While mountains farther from the sight
Have caught the day's departing light,
And autumn's tints upon the leaves
Are paled by these the sunset weaves.

Oh, nevermore that rosy sky
Will darken as the moments fly;
Or color fade from off the lake,
Or mount a duller tint will take.
The glories of the lingering day
Are on that canvas fixed for aye!

The hand that laid those colors fair,
The brain that schemed to set them there,
Have no more work, it seems, to do,
For both are still; the palette, too,
Hangs idly from its peg; and o'er
The box of pigments on the floor
The spider throws her web. The sun
That glittered while the work was done,
Has set in night for him who made
This canvas fair with light and shade.
For ere these glowing hues were dry
He turned him from his task to die.

Ah! not in night his day declined;
Not thus the spirit saith. The mind
That thought, the brain that willed,
Are with diviner cunning skilled,
And somewhere out of earthly sight
The artist is, and morning light
Illumes his canvas; through his soul
The harmonies of heaven roll,
And mortal sunsets to him seem
But as some faintly outlined dream
Recalled in brightest midday gleam.

REGINALD CAMBRIDGE.

Sunday Magazine.

IN A LONDON GARDEN.

I KNOW of gardens far away
Where thrushes in the laurels sing;
Where hyacinths stand stiff and gay,
And daffodils in clusters swing.
But in this dim town-plot of mine,
With sooty houses hemmed about,
There are no flowers fair and fine
To shake their shining petals out.
Yet here and there athwart the sun
Some bright leaf glitters like a gem;
And there is one bud, only one,—
A tight bud on a slender stem.

A tiny treasured mystery
Which by and by will be a rose;
And every day I watch to see
Its tender silken sheath unclose.

On rainy days and windy days,
It seems so frail and soft and small,
I almost wonder as I gaze
If it will ever blow at all.

But there *will* come at last, I think,
A dawn when I shall wake to see
An open blossom, sweet and pink,
Where my one bud was wont to be.
Spectator. FRANCES WYNNE.

OUR GREATER SUN.

ONE soft rich glow, half roseate and half
gold;
One sea of sunset glory in the sky—
Its verge invisible, its end untold—
That melts into the blue insensibly.
The source of all the gorgeous scene has
met
And passed the far horizon's mystic bar,
But leaves its benediction brightening yet
The evening sky with glories spread afar.

Long years ago, another, brighter source
Of glory passed our dim horizon line;
Nor can we see that light until, our course
Of twilight o'er, we hail the dawn divine.
Its glorious after-glow alone we see,
Until we wake, sun of our souls, with thee.

MARGARET KATE ULPH.

Chambers' Journal.

SHADOWS.

SHADOWS come and shadows go—
All the world is full of shadows;
Many hardly deem them so,
And pursue them, two and two,
In the springtime, through the meadows.

Love is not the only aim
All mankind are seen pursuing—
Pleasure, fortune, glory, fame;
Failing these, the quest renewing
After shadows, just the same.

Shadows come and shadows go;
Sorrow does not stay forever;
Time rolls on with ceaseless flow,
Pleasures pass; but so does woe;
Go thy way, complaining never.
Chambers' Journal. JAMES ROCK.

From The Fortnightly Review.

POLITICS AND PROGRESS IN SIAM.

BY THE HON. GEO. CURZON.

SIAM is a country which, though it lies but little off the beaten track of Asiatic travel, is rarely visited by members of the globe-trotting genus. They linger a week amid the enchanting bowers of Ceylon, and they pass at express speed through the equatorial showers of Singapore. But for Bangkok they seldom turn aside, and in their recollection Siam is merely a name on the map, instead of a coign in the memory. Indeed, the extent of popular knowledge about Siam in England did not a short time ago probably much exceed the fact that it is a country which produces and cherishes white elephants, and once produced, while leaving others to cherish, a peculiar variety of twins. Even in writings upon the subject a singular embroidery of fiction has been woven round the real Siam. Ludicrously exaggerated estimates of its population and resources have been given by writers claiming to be competent; and it is one of the regrets of the visitor that he can find no modern work with respectable claims to accuracy or research. The visits of Siamese princes to England in recent years, and their participation in the advantages of English public school and university education, have somewhat dissipated the prevailing ignorance, and have acquainted our countrymen with the fact that here lies another nation endeavoring to pass through the stubborn throes of a second birth, eagerly affecting the externals, if not really convinced by the spirit, of modern civilization, and aspiring to follow at a distance in the enlightened footsteps of Japan. A visit to the country and its capital will provoke surprise at the extent of the progress which has already been made, but will also disclose the long vistas that must still be traversed before Siam can claim to have successfully fortified her integrity against the dangers by which it is threatened.

Figures and facts may be summarized

as follows: An area of two hundred and fifty to three hundred thousand square miles supports a population which the foolish fancy of writers has elevated to from thirty to forty millions, but which the best authorities and oldest residents estimate at between six and nine millions, of whom probably one million or more are Chinese. The bulk of this population is concentrated in the valley of the Menam, or "Mother of Waters," which is the Nile of Siam, diffusing, through numerous confluent creeks, and canals, the rich waters over the country, whence the rice crops spring that are the staple source of occupation, livelihood, and export. Great teak forests line the banks of its upper tributaries, fish swarm in the lower reaches, together supplying the second and third national industries and sources of wealth. The advantageous position of the Menam valley, which is the geographical centre of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, has always given to the people that held it a superior influence and importance, and explains how it is that a nation with so troubled and obscure a history as the Siamese has extended and exerts its authority over regions so widely different in character and situation as the northern Malay states, the valleys of the Salwin and the Mekong, and even the remote highlands that border upon Tonkin and Annam. Many of these outlying portions are still unvisited and unknown; though yearly more and more of their secrets are being surrendered to the energies principally of French explorers, who, for motives of adventure, commerce, or politics disguised as either, have conducted for years a systematic investigation of eastern and north-eastern Siam. The characteristics of the inhabitants of the Menam basin are more familiar. The men are dark-skinned, lithe, well-proportioned, robust; the women have beautiful figures and busts and an erect stature—advantages which are set off by the national dress, consisting of a linen cloth drawn across the bosom below the armpits, and of the Siamese *panung*, or petticoat, tucked up and fastened between the legs (like the

Cambodian *sam-pot*, with which it is identical), so as to constitute a sort of breeches or drawers. This garment is worn by both sexes and all classes from the king to the bond-slave, the difference in material, cotton or silk, being the only indication of rank. Both men and women of the lower orders have bare legs and feet. In the upper classes the men wear a white cotton jacket above the *panung*, and both sexes wear white or colored cotton stockings and shoes.

To an European eye the good looks, if they anywhere exist, of both men and women are irremediably destroyed by the universal use of the betel, which blackens and corrodes the teeth, and causes them to protrude, which renders the spittoon an indispensable article of furniture, and is responsible for the great splashes of red saliva that may be seen everywhere adorning the ground, as they have been ejected from the mouths of the passers-by. Like their fellows in Annam, the Siamese women enjoy great freedom and influence. Being of a most mercantile and managing temperament, they become the self-constituted stewardesses, treasurers, and hucksters of the home, or shop, or store. They may be seen by the hundred going to market, each seated alone in her own canoe with her wares spread out before her. The last king kept a bodyguard of Amazons, with red coats and trousers and small carbines; but the present sovereign has converted them into a species of interior palace police. The national character is docile, indolent, light-hearted, gay. The Siamese are devoted to the holiday-making and ceremonies and processions which accompany the most important anniversaries or incidents of life, death, and religion, and which cause an infinite amount of money to be squandered and time lost. They love games: kite-flying, a sort of shuttlecock-football, and fighting with cocks, crickets, beetles, and fish; though it is to be surmised that the main attraction of these pursuits consists in the scope thereby afforded for betting and gambling, which are the

cardinal national vices. A Siamese will stake money on anything; licensed gambling-houses exist in the cities, and are a large source of income to the government, who farm out the monopoly; a royal lottery is extensively patronized in Bangkok. The gambling-houses and the pawnshops, which are their corollary, and which are stocked with objects pawned or stolen, are a disgrace to the capital. In some streets every other house is a pawnshop, kept by a Chinaman. If suppression of these places were found difficult, at least a great reduction in their numbers might be made, while a substantial revenue would accrue to the crown by the imposition upon them of a heavy tax.

The Buddhist priesthood in Siam is very powerful, and is the possessor of splendid temples, considerable endowments, and great privileges, a position which may be explained, not so much by the vitality of the religious spirit, as by the fact that every man in Siam, from the king downwards, is compelled at some period in his life, usually after he has attained his majority, to enter its ranks, to shave his head, and don the yellow robe, to live in the monastery, and beg his food from door to door in the morning, to eat nothing from noon to night-fall, and to take part in the prescribed temple ritual and teaching. The last king served for over twenty years in the priesthood; and the present king and the crown-prince have both filled their turn. So monk-ridden a country does not afford a favorable field for Christian missions; and though the French Catholics have been long and honorably established in the country, and America has also a band of energetic workers, Siam is one of the few arenas from which British propagandists have wisely held aloof.

The capital, Bangkok, occupies a fine position on either, but principally on the left bank of the Menam, at a distance of twenty-five miles by water from the sea. It is not an old city, having been entirely built during the last hundred years, after a change of capital had been necessitated owing to

the complete destruction of Ayuthia, the former seat of government, by the Burmese in 1767. The Menam at and below the city presents the uniform characteristics of the rivers of Indo-China. It has a bar at its mouth, which does not admit of the passage of vessels drawing more than thirteen and a half feet, and which the Siamese are said to cherish as the palladium of their city from maritime invasion. The broad and tranquil bosom of the river is framed by bananas, palms, and bamboos, elegant *vats*, or pagodas, gleam upon the water's edge; houses built upon piles or pontoons line the margin; and crowds of boats dart up and down the stream or attend the floating markets. At length the signs of life, movement, and shipping become more numerous; the chimneys of big rice-mills are seen pouring a pitchy trail of smoke into the air; spacious buildings in the European style adorn the bank; and the six miles of continuous city life, containing a population which exactitude compels me to reduce from the six hundred thousand to seven hundred thousand of most writers to the more moderate total of one hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand, begin to unroll. Bangkok is a city that has excited the most opposite verdicts, according to the circumstances under which it is contemplated. Those who regard it from the picturesque or sentimental point of view will be fascinated by the broad and crowded river, with its hundreds of branching canals and creeks, alive with canoes, sampans, market-boats, cargo-boats, houseboats, gunboats, shrieking launches, and big merchant steamers from Hongkong or Singapore. The gilded spires of the temples, and the glittering tiled roofs of the shrines soar high into the air on either side; and if this animated scene be further enhanced by the pageantry of the annual processions, when the king visits the temples in a flotilla of barges and canoes of state—the nearest modern analogue to the aquatic festivals of the Venice of the Doges—few prettier sights can be conceived. Those, on the other hand, who scrutinize a

little more closely, and see that the water of the river is surcharged with every abomination, or who follow the malodorous and shallow creeks, will be inclined to share the opinion of the English engineer who pronounced it one of the dirtiest cities of the East, the home of cholera, small-pox, and fever. Bangkok has, however, enormously changed during the last ten years; for in addition to the river-city of which I have been speaking, and the city proper, containing the palace, public offices, and principal buildings, surrounded by a white battlemented wall, a new land-city has sprung into existence, containing many miles of well-laid streets, fringed by private residences and shops, and extending far back from the river frontage. The first street in the city was opened by the last king; but the bulk of these civic improvements has been executed by his successor, who may be termed the Haussmann of modern Bangkok. Along the principal streets runs a tramway, which already pays fifteen per cent. to its shareholders; not content with which return, the managing spirits are stretching an overhead electric cable to supersede the Siamese ponies which at present pull the cars. The streets are laid upon a substratum of brick, and a steam-roller sustains European illusions. Telegraph and telephone wires line the roadway; and when Europeans are seen dashing by in well-appointed vehicles, the spectacle might well be one many a thousand miles removed from Siam.

To an Englishman, undoubtedly, the most striking feature of modern Bangkok is the predominance of English associations and ideas. Of the European population, who number between six hundred and seven hundred, over one-third are English, and of these some forty to fifty are in the government employ. The next strongest commercial influence is that of the Germans, who, however, play no political part. In the third rank stand the Danes, of whom some twenty to thirty are government employés, and are popular with the Siamese, being capable,

cheaper than other foreigners, and without political prepossessions. The bulk of them have been engaged by Commodore de Richelieu, an accomplished Dane, who has for years been in charge of the European yachts and gunboats of the king. Numerically and commercially the French are nowhere, and their tongue is unknown. English is the second language of Bangkok. It appears on the shop-fronts and public buildings, is used on the postage stamps, is taught in the schools, and is spoken with perfect facility by the king and the majority of the princes. Several of these have been educated in England, and three sons of his Majesty are now passing through a similar curriculum. English carriages, built in London, India, or Singapore, roll along the streets; the Siamese officers and cavalry are mounted on Australian horses, which, however, appear unable to resist the rice diet or the climate. English machinery is employed in the mint; two English newspapers represent the local press; the prison is under an English warder and is modelled on European lines. Three English tutors educate the crown-prince and the younger sons of the king. English games, lawn tennis, and billiards, are played with ability by the royal princes who have been in Europe; and in the palace they maintain a club, containing an extensive English library, where upon a table the *Times* lies side by side with *Truth*, and the *Athenæum* with the *Review of Reviews*. Finally eighty-eight per cent. of the trade of the port is carried in British vessels.

Scarcely less remarkable on a lower plane is the activity and mercantile predominance of the Chinese, of whom there must be fifty thousand in the city. China herself declines to acknowledge Siam, whom, as a refractory and mutinous vassal, she snubs and ignores. But for her loss of political ascendancy she has more than compensated by the resistless infiltration of her colonists, who own eighteen of the twenty-five steam rice-mills of Bangkok, in whose hands is the bulk of the export trade of rice, who absorb the retail industries,

farm the monopolies, and own all the pawnshops, and whose leading citizens have built for themselves splendid residences along the river bank.

From the towers of the temples, a few of which can be mounted, the city is seen buried in a mantle of verdure, whence emerge the fanciful pinnacles of the *prachedis*, or relic shrines of the *wats*, and the lofty double and treble roofs of the sanctuaries within which gilded Buddhas flash from the summit of pyramidal thrones. Both the exterior and the interior of these edifices are resplendent with color and gilding, executed often with the coarsest materials, but with extraordinary decorative effect, one of the commonest methods employed being the setting in plaster of fragments of broken pottery, so as to form flowers, dragons, figures, and fantastic designs. The Buddha images within are either standing, seated, or recumbent, one of the latter, of peculiar fame, being one hundred and forty feet long. From any quarter the enclosure of the Royal Palace is most conspicuous, including, behind a white crenellated wall, a bewildering coruscation of pinnacles, towers, and spires. This remarkable group of buildings, which is in some respects the most curious in the East, and suggests faint reminiscences of the Kremlin at Moscow, is in its present form the work of the reigning monarch. He built the New Palace, his own residence; he raised the public offices; and he completed the principal temple, or Wat Prakao, which had been in course of erection for nearly one hundred years. The interior of the enclosure may be divided into three parts. The first is a paved rectangular platform, some two hundred yards by half as broad, entirely covered with temples, kiosques, pavilions, images, statues, and shrines, glittering with every variety and combination of hue. Here is the Temple of the Emerald Idol, paved with tiles of brass, and containing a famous image of Buddha, variously said to be made of emerald, green glass, or jade. Within its frescoed walls occurs twice a year the solemn ceremony of drinking the water of

allegiance to the king;¹ while the devoutness of the present and of previous monarchs is attested by countless offerings of precious stones and gold. Here is a shrine, containing in a closed cabinet the holy scriptures, written on palm-leaves in the Cambodian Pali character. Here is the great *prachedi*, or relic tope, entirely of gold; here the sealed temple, wherein are deposited in golden urns the ashes of the royal princes; here the shrine which contains the ashes of the white elephants. Tanks, trees, elegant loggias, and scores of grotesque, life-size statues representing foreign peoples and dresses, executed by some droll Chinaman in Hongkong, adorn the terraces. In an adjoining part of the enclosure are the principal public offices, built in the European style. The third division contains the New Palace, erected for the king by an English architect, who has gracefully combined the elegance of an Italian structure with the peculiar and fanciful towers of Siam. On either side of this building are the immense pillared audience-halls of previous sovereigns, with gilded thrones raised aloft beneath the nine-staged royal umbrella of white, fringed with gold. In the same vicinity are the stables of the so-called white elephants, of whom there are now four, but who have fallen from the high estate of the days when, if the legend be true, they were fed by princes from platters of gold. They are still regarded with immense respect, as the peculiar appanage of royalty, and are sometimes brought out in processions, though they have never in Siam been mounted by the king.

In a drawing-room of the New Palace, handsomely furnished from Europe, and hung with portraits of European sovereigns, his Majesty was kind enough to receive me. The present dynasty dates only from 1782, after the fall of Ayuthia and the shifting of the capital; and its two longest and

most remarkable reigns have been those of the present king's father and of himself. The former, King Mongkut, reigned from 1851 to 1868, after spending over twenty years in the cloister. He was a sovereign of singular enlightenment, a philosopher, and a man of science. It was with him that in 1857 Sir J. Bowring concluded the treaty which is the basis of our present relations with Siam, and to him was due the first opening up of his country to the electric influence of the West. Dying in 1868, from a fever caught during an expedition to witness an eclipse of the sun, he was succeeded by his reigning Majesty Chulalongkorn I., the ninth of the eighty or more children with whom he had enriched the world. The young king was then fifteen years of age, and is now a little short of forty. He has two full brothers, the Ong Yai and the Ong Noi, of whom the former fills no official position, while the latter is commander-in-chief, and twenty half-brothers, the sons of different mothers, of whom several are his leading ministers in Bangkok or commissioners in the provinces. The first queen of the king was accidentally drowned with her child in 1880; but his two principal surviving queens, called respectively the right hand and the left hand queens, are her sisters, and his own half-sisters, the royal blood being thus kept free from alien contamination. The first of these ladies is the mother of the crown-prince, who is a bright and intelligent youth of fourteen years of age. The king is a much-married individual, having had in addition a number of wives or concubines, whom rumor places at not less than one hundred, and some fifty or sixty children, of whom over thirty are said to be still living. He is a decidedly handsome man, with open and agreeable features, an excellent figure, and a dignified bearing. When I saw him he was dressed with extreme simplicity in a white cotton jacket over a blue silk *pannung*, and white stockings; but his official costume, worn only on ceremonial occasions, is among the most gorgeous in the East. His Maj-

¹ This takes place in April and September. In the water have been dipped swords, daggers, spears, guns, and other implements, typifying the idea of revenge upon the faithless or disloyal subject. It is tasted by the princes, ministers, and leading officials, and is sprinkled upon their foreheads.

esty speaks and understands English perfectly ; but in audience prefers to employ his native tongue, which was interpreted, along with my replies, by his half-brother and minister for foreign affairs, Prince Devawongse. The king's amiable disposition meets with universal praise, and he is personally liked by every one who comes in contact with him. His constitution is said to be less strong than it was ; and it is rare that a long reign in the East does not exercise a somewhat enervating effect upon the principal actor. It is a reign, however, that has been remarkable for many reforms, and will always fill an honorable place in history. It has witnessed the partial abolition of slavery ; the collapse of the old cast-iron system of court etiquette and servile obeisance ; the opening of courts of justice and of a European college in Bangkok ; the introduction of a postal system, the electric telegraph, telephones, and railways ; and the Europeanization of the city and government. In these aspects it may not inaptly be compared with the reign of Mutshuito, the reigning emperor of Japan. King Chulalonkorn has also benefited by foreign travel, for he has twice left his country, once upon a voyage to Singapore and Batavia, and once to Rangoon, Calcutta, and through India to Bombay, experiences which may not have been without effect upon his political predilections.

Siam is very proud of the advances which she has made and is making in the direction of European culture and enlightenment. Undoubtedly these are remarkable, and may be fitly enumerated. The theory of government in Siam has always been that of an autocratic monarchy of the old type, in which every function of State, all authority, and all ownership of property, not otherwise conceded, were concentrated in the person of the sovereign. Not yet has this view been abandoned ; for all executive action still depends upon the king's initiative, the revenue of the country (which is estimated at about £2,000,000, derived from the farm of monopolies, direct and indirect taxation, the land-tax, and customs), is the

royal revenue, and is disposed of by him ; and concessions for the development of any of its resources must be inquired for and purchased from the same quarter. Nevertheless, in the present reign this Oriental conception of monarchy has taken on certain occidental forms. Hitherto the succession to the throne has been regulated, neither by law of inheritance nor by nomination of the reigning sovereign, but by a sort of agreement on the part of the royal council after his death. The present king took a decisive step towards converting the throne of Siam into a hereditary patrimony, by declaring his eldest son, by a royal princess, crown-prince in 1887. This proceeding will be probably found to consolidate the monarchy, by eliminating or reducing a fertile source of previous disturbance in the rivalry of sons or brothers, aspiring to a crown which was accessible to all ; though the effect may in an Eastern country be more open to question upon the character of the individual thus selected. A not less prudent step was the abolition, upon the death of its last occupant, who was the king's cousin, of the position of second king. This peculiar honorific title, which appears to have been limited to this part of the East, and which bore not the faintest analogy to relations of the mikado and shogun in Japan, with which it has sometimes been ignorantly compared, carried with it a palace, court, ministry, army, provinces, and revenue, and was usually bestowed upon a brother or near relative of the reigning sovereign. Though not necessarily implying the succession to the throne, it frequently gave its bearer an advantage which enabled him, on the demise of the crown, to step into the vacant place, and which was the source, even during the present reign, of suspicions, jealousies, and squabbles, for which there was no compensating return. Its abolition, therefore, is an unmixed benefit. A further step in the Europeanization of government was taken by the king when he practically superseded the old Council of State, consisting of ministers, princes, and nominees of the sovereign, now

existing only on paper, by a new Council of Ministers, or Cabinet Council, in 1891. This body is composed of about twelve persons, the heads of the various departments, most of whom are the king's brothers. As a rule it meets every evening for purposes of deliberation, and it makes recommendations to the king. A sort of titular pre-eminence in its ranks is accorded to Prince Dewawongse, commonly called Prince Dewan, one of the king's half-brothers (and full brother to the two queens), who is minister for foreign affairs, and the most influential subject in the kingdom. But it must not be supposed that there is any Cabinet cohesion or responsibility, as are found in countries possessing representative government and parliamentary institutions. The ministers are merely the individual nominees of the sovereign, whom he names or removes at his pleasure; and a resemblance may more properly be traced to the Imperial Council in Russia than to any European Cabinet. Similarly, in the organization of the various departments, no trained staff of permanent officials—the essence of a successful bureaucratic system—has yet been created; and everything depends upon the head. The royal authority has been further consolidated during the present reign by the wide extension of the electric telegraph, the most important aid alike to sovereign power and to democratic rights that has ever been devised, whereby the outlying provinces and their governors are placed in direct and immediate communication with the capital; while the king has appropriately utilized his extensive *clientèle* of brothers, not merely as ministers in the capital, but as royal commissioners in the provinces, where they command a superior prestige.

The army of Siam is small, and consists for the most part of a few thousand men, who are called up to the capital for drill during three months of the year. This function is performed by Danish inspectors. On the whole, the government is probably wise in not embarking upon a large military expenditure; for the only European foe

with whom its troops are at all likely to require to contend could vanquish an opposition greater than that which Siam, under the most favorable circumstances, could array; and her policy should rather be to maintain sufficient armed forces to guard her frontiers and preserve order, and to look elsewhere for help should serious danger threaten from without. The navy, on the other hand, though small, is an efficient force, consisting of a small but well-handled flotilla of gunboats and cruisers, mainly officered by Danes, and well adapted to all ordinary needs upon the coast or on the Menam. A very handsome new armed cruiser, with twenty-four hundred registered tonnage, and carrying two heavy Armstrongs in barbette towers, as well as eight Hotchkiss guns on the upper deck, has lately been built for the king in Leith, and now lies in the river off the palace.

Education for the upper classes has hitherto chiefly taken the form of the despatch of the king's sons and brothers and of the sons of nobles to Europe, where in more than one country, but chiefly in England, they have studied at the university, for the navy, and at the bar. In Bangkok a college was opened some years ago, called Sunandakulaya, under an American missionary, to teach English to Siamese youths; but its premises have recently been handed over to the execution of a new scheme, which is no less than an English boarding school for young ladies of high rank, to instruct whom three ladies have been engaged from England. These projects are tentative, and cannot be said to rest as yet upon an established footing, but they are curious as illustrations of the tendency, common to Oriental countries, to choose the advanced in preference to the rudimentary steps in pursuit of foreign ideals. Other evidences of more successful assimilated civilizations are the institution of well organized postal, telegraphic, and customs services (in which the Germans are in the ascendant), of a native silver coinage—the former silver ingots being replaced by the *tical*, a coin not unlike a florin in

appearance, which is minted from molten Mexican dollars, in the ratio of three-fifths (*i.e.*, 1 *tical* = 60 cents), and of smaller silver coins, as also of a paper currency for small sums, recently started. Aware of the advantages of advertisement, Siam has exerted herself to make a good show at the Chicago Exhibition; and the contents of her pavilion there will be illustrative both of the resources, the habits, and the artistic productions of the country.

Perhaps the most noteworthy step taken by the present king in its ulterior consequences, has been the partial abolition of serfdom. By a decree promulgated in 1872, no Siamese subject born after the king's accession in 1868 can be legally held in slavery after the age of twenty-one. This, however, does not affect any one older at the present moment than twenty-five; nor does it prevent the voluntary vassalage, or feudal relationship, which has become so ingrained in the habits of the people as to be extremely difficult of extirpation. The bulk of the existing slaves are debt-slaves, *i.e.*, persons who, having incurred debt, have handed over their persons and services to some superior willing to relieve them of the obligation; entering, so to speak, into a contract of unspecified duration, in which one party advances a certain sum of money, while the other engages to render a certain amount of service, being housed, fed, and supported in the interim, and having it in his power at any time to terminate the connection upon repayment of the sum originally advanced. The bulk of work in Siam is performed by persons occupying this position; and detrimental though the system is in the paralysis of individual effort, and the moral torpor which it engenders, it is yet free from the worst features of slavery as formerly practised in the West Indies and in America, while its too abrupt abolition would result in a dislocation and displacement of labor that would not easily be readjusted. Nevertheless the government is said to be contemplating a scheme of total emancipation; a preliminary step to which would be the discharge of the

self-indebtedness from its own funds; and all success may be wished to it in a project without which the country can never really lift up its head.

Quite recently a fresh step has been taken to enlist the sympathies of the West. A foreign adviser to the government, with the exceptionally high rank of minister plenipotentiary, has been appointed in the person of M. Rolin Jaquemyns, an eminent Belgian jurist and former minister, and a man of wide accomplishments and experience. If the abilities of this gentleman are seriously utilized, he may be of great service to the Siamese government. If, on the other hand, as has too often happened in other Eastern countries, it is the ægis of his name rather than the wisdom of his counsel that is required, and if, after a time, he finds himself politely ignored, the experiment will be one from which the government itself will suffer in public estimation.

For years past the friends of Siam, in company, perhaps, with not a few self-interested speculators, have urged upon her the construction of railways for the development of her territories and the extension of her trade. In a country through which pass some of the immemorial caravan routes of the Far East, and where great distances require to be travelled by slow and precarious means, such a policy would appear to possess peculiar recommendations. The lack of initiative or of funds, and the rival schemes of competing counselors, have hitherto stood in the way of its successful realization. Among the railways which have been projected or surveyed, or for which in some cases concessions have actually been granted, are the following: (1) Bangkok to Chieng Mai, with branches to Korat, Luang Prabang on the middle Mekong, and Chieng Rai or Chieng Sen on the upper Mekong; (2) Bangkok to Rakheng on the Meping, and thence to Chieng Mai; (3) Bangkok to Patrieu on the Bangpakong River; (4) Bangkok to Pechaburi; (5) Chantabun on the south coast to Battambang. At length, however, the era of inaction

has ceased, and two railroads are actually starting into existence. The first of these is a small, narrow-gauge line, fourteen miles in length, connecting the capital with Paknam at the mouth of the Menam, which is being constructed by a limited liability company, and will shortly be finished. It will be useful for passenger traffic, and for the supply of the capital with provisions, particularly fish, but it has no larger importance. The second is a much more considerable affair, being a broad-gauge Royal State Railway, from Bangkok via Ayuthia and Saraburi to the rich alluvial table-land of Korat in the north-east, a distance of one hundred and sixty-five miles. The significance of this line consists in the fact that it follows a well-trodden trade route, by which goods from Moulmein and Bangkok find their way eastward to the Mekong; and its value will be doubled if, as is contemplated, it is eventually extended to that river itself, either to Nong Kai on the great northerly bend, or in an easterly direction to Ubone, an extension which would, in my opinion, effectually kill the already moribund French hopes of ever establishing a lucrative trade on the Mekong. There was a tremendous tussle in Bangkok for the contract of this railway between the English and the Germans, of whom the former were finally successful in December, 1891. The line is to be finished in five years from that date, and the contract price is £1,600,000. A concession has also recently been granted to an Englishman for a line, not in Siam proper, but in the protected Malay States to the south, which is to cross the Malay peninsula from east to west (replacing the old abandoned scheme of the Kra Canal), starting from the roadstead of Singora, and leading to the state of Kedah, a distance of seventy-six miles, where an extension southwards would be easy to the adjacent British possession of Wellesley, opposite the island of Penang. The crossing of the peninsula is capable of becoming a decided gain to traffic; and there are said to be mineral resources in the interior awaiting

exploitation. But it is not certain that the above is the best alignment; Singora at present lacks anything like a harbor; I have not yet heard that the concession has been placed upon the market; and it would be premature to pronounce upon a scheme which has hardly passed the embryonic stage.

Though the mineral wealth of Siam is believed to be very great in the precious metals and stones, as well as in mineral ores, her efforts to exploit or develop it have not so far been attended with very happy results either to herself or to the concessionaries. A company was formed to work the gold supplies, both crushing and washing, of Bangtapan, but operations are suspended. An English company possesses similar rights at Kabin; a French concessionary is said to enjoy superior chances at Wattana. The sapphire and ruby mines of Chantabun belong to an English company, who expect great things, but have not yet realized them. Siam is indeed passing through the phase, uniform and absolutely inevitable in the evolution of every Oriental country as it comes into contact with Europe, of granting permission to work resources about which it knows nothing itself, to persons whose knowledge is very little greater. The object in both cases is to make money out of the transaction, and if both burn their fingers, it is the penalty for want of caution in the one case, for mere speculation in the other. By one such recent venture in Bangkok the government has been the gainer, for a company having been formed to introduce the electric light, and having spent its entire capital upon machinery without ever attaining to fruition, the king, who had a mortgage upon the property, now steps in and acquires the whole concern at less than half the cost price.

Such are the main symptoms or proofs of Siamese advance towards the millennium. They constitute an interesting, and in some respects a remarkable record, and they indicate a desire on the part of the sovereign and his leading advisers, whose sincerity there is no reason to doubt, to lift their country on

to a higher level. But they have grave difficulties with which to contend, and many a long league lies before them. Old residents and high authorities in the country will tell you that outside Bangkok public works are neglected and canals allowed to silt up and become choked; that the rice-producing area of the country might, in competent hands, easily be doubled; that in the timber-growing districts, one of the main sources of Siamese wealth, no system or science of forestry exists, the trees being cut down at random with no effort to replace them; that the officials in the provinces receive ludicrously inadequate salaries, and are compelled in consequence to practise every form of extortion; that money is foolishly squandered on processions, ceremonies, palaces, and harems, which, otherwise applied, might regenerate the country; that the vicious system of farming out the monopolies is an obstacle to any true fiscal reform; that the administration of justice is ignorant and bad, there being no codified law, the royal edicts being contradictory and confusing, and the common law being haphazard and unwritten; that taxation presses heavily on the lower classes, imposts being levied with startling ingenuity upon almost every implement or product of industry among the poor; that the law is only obeyed in the capital, and is ignored in many of the remoter provinces, where dacoity flourishes, and where there is little security of property; and that the tie that holds together the peculiar congeries of races and tribes that constitute the Siamese kingdom would snap at the least external pressure. Some go so far as to say that Siam merely coquets with reform, and that in her heart she is unregenerate and unconvinced. How far these charges are true it would require a wider knowledge than I can claim to determine. Undoubtedly, in her quest after amelioration, Siam has to contend with inherent drawbacks, from which Japan for instance has been free. She has not a homogeneous population, and her blood is constantly being affected by the intermingling of

Chinese and alien strains. The racial idiosyncrasies of her people, and the climatic conditions under which they exist, are favorable to lethargy, and do not either suggest or encourage effort. The institution of slavery has eaten like a canker into the vitals of society, and its effects cannot be shaken off in a decade or even in a generation. All these considerations render unqualified congratulations or hopes equally premature. On the other hand, the administration of the country is in the hands of a singularly capable body of men, imbued with the ideas and the learning of the West. Prince Dewan, whom I have before mentioned, though only thirty-four years of age, is a man who impresses all who come in contact with him with both the rapidity and the range of his intellect. Prince Damrong, who travelled in England and India in 1891-2, and is now minister of agriculture, is also a man of wide and scholarly attainments; and among the other princes are men scarcely less capable. To me, I confess, the chief interest in the administration of which these are the principal figures lies in the fact that, alone among the nations of the world, the government of Siam is in the hands of young men. From the king downwards, there is scarcely a single minister who is above the age of forty, and many are much younger. What we should denominate in England the "old gang" has been shown the door after a long rule, and has ceased to exercise a potent influence upon the machine of state. By a mild and unrecorded revolution a younger generation has been installed in its place; and if ever statesmen had a chance of saving their country, if ever there was scope for brains and courage, if ever the hour demanded the man, it is here. There are those, of course, who lament the day that is gone, and who deprecate, not without some reason, the relegation of the old families and of the nobles who formerly filled the posts of state, to a background of obscurity or seclusion. Their forebodings may turn out to be well-founded; but for the present there is a disposition to give the new régime a

fair trial. What are the main dangers, other than internal disruption (and that comes very slowly in the East), by which its task is jeopardized and may be suspended, inquiry at the Quai d'Orsai in Paris might possibly reveal.

From The English Illustrated Magazine.
VÉRA BLAVATSKY.

BY EDITH STANFORTH.

I.

NELLY'S RECOLLECTIONS.

I AM an only child. My mother was a Hungarian, beautiful, pious, and accomplished. My father fell in love with her and married her without consulting his family on the subject. A foreigner and a Catholic was not likely to meet with approval. But their indignation reached its culminating point when my mother died, while I was still quite young, and my father, at her dying request, placed me in a convent to be educated. From that day they washed their hands of us altogether. We did very well without them. I remained in the convent till I was seventeen, and then one day my father swooped down upon it and carried me off. Since then we have never been parted. We led a wandering life, a pair of Bohemian companions in the truest sense of the word. Where our tastes differed each gave up cheerfully for the sake of the other. My father had a small independence which he added to by writing for the papers and magazines. Sometimes I thought that with his remarkable talents he might have made more of his life. He was capable of anything, but he had no ambition, and only worked when he was driven to it. I used to fancy that there was some story in his early life which would account for this apathy. But he was singularly reticent about his youth, and whatever it was I never heard it.

Four happy years went by, and then one day my health began to fail without apparent cause. I lost my color, and I could neither eat nor sleep. My father took alarm and carried me off to a

famous doctor. He examined my throat, looked grave, asked my father if there was any consumption in the family, and finally ordered me to Royat-les-Bains.

We had travelled all night to escape the dust. My father and I had both gone to bed on our arrival, but I had insisted on getting up for church, though beyond making *acte de présence* I do not know that my going was of much use. I sat down in the second row of chairs and listened to the droning voice of the priest as he read through the mass regardless of heat and flies and the high-pitched voice of a singer from Paris who had graciously offered to take a part in the choir in aid of the restoration of the church. The *quête* for this purpose, as we were informed in little printed programmes, would be performed by the Countess Anna Narishkine. That was she, I supposed, on the opposite side, in a black hat with poppies in it, and with a velvet bag on a *prie-dieu* by her side.

What with heat and fatigue my eyes kept closing in spite of myself, and I was just dropping off when I was aroused by a little commotion at the bottom of the church. The next moment a tall, handsome, grey-haired woman in a crimson velvet cloak swept up the aisle. She was followed by two young men and a pretty, modest-looking girl, a companion evidently. They took possession of the seats in front of me. A Russian princess at the very least, I thought. My sleepiness had vanished, and my active fancy immediately began to weave a romance. The younger son, the fair-haired one, was in love with the companion, and she with him, of course. I foresaw any number of complications, and I was in the midst of an exciting story, when I happened to look round and saw the eyes of the elder brother fixed on me with an expression of considerable amusement. He had noticed, no doubt, the fixed gaze of which I had been almost unconscious. I was recalled with a shock to myself and the place I was in. I colored, half with shame,

half with annoyance at being caught in what looked like vulgar curiosity. Burying my face in my hands I tried to apply myself to my interrupted devotions. But when after a while I looked up, I found him watching me still. This time it was he who changed color, but he did not avert his gaze, which indeed was perfectly respectful.

Going out of church I found the two brothers in front of me. Presently the young girl whom I had seen in church approached them.

"Boris Ivanovitch," she said, addressing the elder of the two, "the princess sends me to ask if you will drive with her."

"I thank you, Véra Michailovna, but I would rather walk," he replied.

"And you, Alexis?" turning to the other, with a faint increase in color. "I—will do whatever you wish." The last words were spoken in a voice meant only for her ear, but I just caught them as I slipped into my carriage and drove back to the hotel.

The day following I was sitting under the trees in the park, when I saw my friend of the day before approaching with the Countess Narishkine. They sat down in front of me without seeing me.

"Boris," said the countess, "you know I have always taken an interest in you. I don't care for Alexis. He is as empty-headed as he is handsome. But you are different. I have never forgotten how you stood by me when others held aloof. And I should be sorry if you got into trouble on his account."

"What is it you fear?"

"He is in danger on two sides," she said, leaning forward and lowering her voice. "Last night I was coming home from the Casino when I saw him cross the road to speak to a man. He was in the shadow, but I recognized him at once. It was Nicholas Lavretsky, who was implicated in the last plot against the emperor. I warned Alexis yesterday, but he would not listen to me."

"The other danger," continued the countess, "is perhaps less grave, and

yet—I don't know. Have you ever suspected Alexis of an intrigue with your mother's companion?"

"With Véra? Impossible, countess. An orphan under my mother's protection!"

"I saw him in the park early this morning with his arm round her waist. She was crying and he was kissing away her tears. It would be awkward for the family if he married her."

"I would rather ten thousand times he married her than committed a dishonorable action," exclaimed Boris energetically.

The countess shrugged her shoulders and moved away to take her second glass.

It was a beautiful evening. We had arranged to dine outside on the terrace overlooking the garden. I was leaning over the parapet when I saw my father come up the path followed by a tall young man whom I recognized with surprise.

"Nelly," said my father, "this is Prince Boris Labanoff, the son of an old friend of mine. I have persuaded him to dine with us."

We shook hands. I felt Prince Labanoff's eyes regarding me with the same expression of serious interest they had worn in church on Sunday.

Our little dinner went off very pleasantly; my father rather monopolized the conversation, but Prince Labanoff seemed quite content to listen. When we parted I felt as though I had known him for years.

The next day my father took me to call on the princess. They had a beautiful villa half-way up the hill with a beautiful view of Clermont and the hills beyond. The princess was very gracious; she made me sit down on a low chair by her side, and told me that my father was an old friend and had known her husband. I did not see the young girl, and after a while I ventured to ask where she was.

"Véra?" said the princess negligently; "she has gone out to buy me some gloves."

I wondered if she had met Alexis on the way.

II.

VERA'S DIARY.

July 18th.—This morning when I met Alexis in the park he saw that I had been crying and asked me why. I would not tell him, but he guessed. His face darkened, and he was about to speak when I put my hand over his mouth.

"Oh, hush, Alexis!" I exclaimed; "remember she is your mother." He caught my hand and kissed it.

"Sweet saint!" he cried, "I would I could bear you away from this slavery. But patience yet a little longer." He put his arm round my waist and kissed me. Just then I heard a movement in the bushes behind us. Alexis hastily released me and looked round. I was pale with alarm.

"Do you think any one saw us?" I whispered. He looked annoyed, but forced a smile.

"Never fear, Véra," he said, "they are not likely to guess the truth."

I saw the pretty English girl who was in church this afternoon. She was sitting under the trees listening to the band. I wish I knew her; I should like to have her for my friend. She looks so sweet and good. But perhaps she would think my affection an impertinence. They say the English are so proud. I do not think she is, though. I saw her pick up a little crying child that had fallen down and kiss it. I feel so lonely sometimes. I wish I had some one to take counsel with.

July 19th.—Alexis is furious with his brother. Boris has been speaking to him about us. I wonder who told him. To-day the Countess Narishkine came to see the princess. "Do you not walk in the park in the morning early?" she asked. My heart nearly died within me as I murmured yes.

"You should be careful. It is sometimes dangerous to the health under the trees."

"What are you saying to Véra, Anna?" asked the princess, whose hearing is not very good.

"I am telling her to be careful of the air these cold mornings."

I felt a little reassured by these words, and gave her a glance full of gratitude. She seemed moved. When she got up to go away I held the door open for her. She bent forward and whispered, "Confide in Boris. He is your best friend."

After she was gone I asked the princess's permission to go out and buy her gloves. I felt the need of being alone. She granted it. When I came back I found her unusually excited. She had had another visitor.

"Such a pretty girl, Véra. English. I quite lost my heart to her. I have known her father for years. I think she would do very nicely for Alexis. She is not rich, but of good family. I like Englishwomen. They make good domestic wives, just what Alexis wants to keep him steady."

I told Alexis what the princess had said about the young English lady. He laughed and said he must get Boris to introduce him to her.

I felt a cold chill at his words. What if he should like her better than me? Alexis saw the change in my face.

"You foolish child!" he said affectionately. "Jealous already?"

I felt ashamed. Yet what he proposed did not seem to me right. Even if he did not take a fancy to her she might to him. He is so handsome and attractive.

July 20th.—I met her to-day in the street. She was dressed all in white. Her hair is quite fair and her eyes as blue as heaven. She smiled at me as she passed. I felt my heart go out to her.

July 21st.—Boris has been telling me about her. Her name is Miss Le Strange—"Nelly Le Strange," he said, lingering over the words. She asked him about me, and he told her my story, how my father died and left me quite alone, and how the princess took me in, and I had lived with them ever since. She said he must introduce me to her. She would like to know me. I wish I could tell her my secret.

This afternoon we drove up to the park on the hill. The princess and I were having tea when I saw Boris ap-

proaching with Miss Le Strange and her father. The princess was delighted.

"Come and sit down by me," she exclaimed. "Véra, give Miss Le Strange some tea."

"Will you not introduce us?" asked Miss Le Strange.

The princess looked rather surprised.

"Mademoiselle Blavatsky, Miss Le Strange," she said.

The conversation became general. The princess had hold of Miss Le Strange's hand, and was stroking it caressingly. She seemed to have taken a wonderful fancy to this young girl. I was not surprised. There was a charm about her difficult to resist.

"But where is Alexis?" asked the princess at length. "Go and find him, Véra."

"Let me go with you," said Miss Le Strange, jumping up and putting her hand through my arm.

We turned into a side path out of sight and hearing.

"I wanted so much to see you," she said. "Prince Labanoff told me about you the other night, and I have been thinking about you ever since. Véra — may I call you Véra?" — let us be friends."

The tears were in my eyes. I would have kissed her hand, but she prevented me.

"My cheek, if you will, but not my hand."

And bending forward she kissed me.

We did not find Alexis, but when we came back he was sitting by his mother's side.

"My youngest son," said the princess, introducing him with a proud inflexion in her voice.

Miss Le Strange bowed. I saw that he was struck with her beauty, as no one could fail to be, and a jealous pang shot across my heart. But presently I noticed that though she listened to him and answered him when he spoke to her, her eyes kept wandering to where Boris sat silent in the background, but never taking his eyes off her face. It was a revelation. If it could only be! It would make things so much easier for me.

July 22nd. — I was playing to the princess this evening when Boris came up to the piano.

"Go on playing, Véra," he said. "I want to talk to you. Do you know where Alexis goes every evening?"

"Where Alexis goes?" I faltered. "No, prince, how should I?"

"I fancied you were in his confidence," with a keen glance at my disturbed face. "I have reason to suppose he meets the Nihilist Lavretsky."

My hands nearly dropped from the keyboard.

"You did not know, then? I thought he might have told you."

"No," I murmured. "I did not know."

I felt sick with alarm and horror. Lavretsky! That dangerous man on whose account my father had narrowly escaped being sent to Siberia. They were school companions and friends. He came to us one night and asked for shelter. My father granted it. The next day the police made a descent upon the house. Lavretsky was gone, but papers of a compromising nature were found in his room. My father was arrested; for a fortnight I never even knew where he was. Then he was restored to me, his innocence proved. But how ill! How changed! That fortnight's agony of mind laid the seeds of the disease that carried him to his grave. I remembered how plausible Lavretsky was; how he made black appear white and evil good. And Alexis is exposed to this influence — Alexis, ardent and excitable, weak and easily led. How can I save him?

July 23rd. — I have spoken to Alexis. He laughed at my fears. It was only to amuse himself, he said, to pass the time. Lavretsky was the best of men. He was not likely to lead him into danger; he was always counselling caution. As for Boris, he was a regular old nurse, always fidgiting about something or other.

"The other day it was about you. He warned me if he saw reason for doing so he should consider it his duty to interfere. You were under his mother's protection, and he would not see

you wronged. I felt inclined to tell him that under the circumstances it was more my business than his." My heart warmed to Boris for his generous words.

"Oh, Alexis!" I said, "why should we not tell him? If you knew how I hate deceiving them all! Every kind word the princess speaks to me is a stab to my heart."

"She does not speak many," said Alexis, laughing. "No, my Véra," kissing me, "you must trust me a little longer; I know my mother better than you do."

"But what do you hope in the future?" I could not help asking.

"In three months I attain my majority, and then I can afford to do as I like."

I sighed. It would have been so much more honorable, I thought, to own the truth, at any rate to Boris, kind, generous Boris. And then—I have another reason which I have not dared to own to Alexis.

Miss Le Strange and her father dined with us to-night. After dinner she sang to us. Boris listened with rapt attention, and the princess had tears in her eyes.

"She reminds me," she murmured, "of my little girl who died."

The princess is so fond of her. What would I not give for a few crumbs of the affection she lavishes so freely on this stranger!

July 27th.—I feel very uneasy about Alexis. He seems to have something on his mind. He is moody and irritable, at times nervous and excitable, at others terribly depressed. I have tried in vain to find out from him what is the matter. I know Lavretsky is at the bottom of it. If I could only see him I would make an appeal to him for my father's sake. Perhaps he might listen to me.

I have seen him! To-night I saw Alexis rise from his seat beside his mother and leave the room. I stole out after him. The princess might miss me and be displeased at my absence. I could not help it. I felt reckless. I must save my darling if

possible, whatever the risk to myself. I threw on a shawl so as to cover my face if necessary. Alexis was just passing out of the door. I followed him at a little distance, down the hill, and into the park. A man in a slouched hat and long cloak was waiting for him under the trees. They joined company and struck into a secluded path. The night was damp and dark; it had been raining, and there was no one about. I dared not approach too near lest I should be seen, and I feared Alexis's anger. My object was to keep them in sight. For more than half an hour they walked up and down, talking earnestly. At last they stopped. I was close beside them, hidden behind a bush. I heard Lavretsky say, "You have gone too far to recede. It is as dangerous now to go back as to go forward."

"I know," answered Alexis. "I only ask for one more day. You shall have my answer to-morrow."

"Why not to-night?" said Lavretsky.

"No, not to-night," answered Alexis firmly. "But to-morrow without fail."

"Be it so," said Lavretsky.

They clasped hands and parted. I waited till Alexis was out of sight, then I glided out of the trees. Lavretsky started.

"A woman!" he exclaimed—and seizing my arm, "speak if you value your life! What have you heard?"

"Nothing but your last words," I answered. "But it matters not. Your secret is safe with me for his sake. Oh, Lavretsky," kneeling at his feet, "save him! In my father's name, whose life you imperilled."

"Why, who are you?"

"Véra Blavatsky."

"Véra Blavatsky!" he repeated.

There was a long pause in which I seemed to hear my own heart beating.

"Rise, Véra," said Lavretsky at length in a voice that trembled a little. "It is not fit that your father's child should kneel to me."

"I will not rise till you tell me that he is safe."

"He? Who?"

"Alexis Labanoff."

"Why, what is he to you?"

"I dare not tell you."

"Véra," said Lavretsky sternly, "if you wish me to help you let there be no mysteries between us. If this young man has wronged you he shall do you justice—ay, if he were twenty times a Labanoff."

"I am his wife," I answered proudly, lifting my head.

Lavretsky was thunderstruck.

"His wife!" he repeated, and said no more, but stood thinking deeply. At length he roused himself. His emotion had passed away; he was once more the Lavretsky I remembered, and whom I had almost lost sight of in this interview.

"Véra Labanoff," he said coldly, "I cannot help you. Your lot is that of thousands of women; you must bear it as they do. Your husband has cast in his lot with us. I cannot bid him abandon the sacred cause of liberty for your tears. Why, I myself," warning, "have given up home, country, and friends, all that is sweet in life for its sake. The fate of nations hangs sometimes on a single man."

I could not speak. The disappointment was too cruel, just when I felt certain of success.

"Yet hear me, daughter of my old friend," and again his voice softened. "What I can do I will. As far as it is possible my life shall shelter his. I will care for him as a father for his only son."

He offered me his hand. I refused it.

"No," I cried wildly. "You have rejected my prayer. May God judge between you and me!"

I hurried away. And now I have locked myself into my own room to think. The princess's maid came to the door just now and said her mistress had been asking for me. I told her I had a terrible headache and prayed the princess to excuse me. She went away. I hope she will not come back.

What am I to do? Is it any use to appeal to Alexis? I am afraid not. And yet I must try. I am his wife. I have a right to speak to him.

July 28th.—Alexis avoids being left alone with me. He suspects my purpose, I think, and is afraid of his resolution yielding to my prayers. But his eyes keep seeking mine with such love and tenderness that I can scarcely bear it. It is as though he were taking a long farewell of me.

This afternoon Nelly Le Strange came to fetch me for a walk. Alexis offered to accompany us. I hoped to have a chance of speaking to him while we were out. But evening came, and still I had found no opportunity.

At ten o'clock Alexis rose and wished his mother good-night.

"Already?" she said in surprise.

"I am tired. I sat up late last night."

He left the room—I was in an agony. Had he gone to keep his tryst? Boris noticed my paleness.

"You look very ill, Véra," he said with concern.

"My head aches so," I answered—truthfully enough. The pain of my mind reacted on my body.

"Why don't you go to bed? I will sit up with my mother."

"Yes, go," said the princess, and I went.

I looked in the hall. Alexis had not gone out, for his hat was still there. I hurried up-stairs and knocked at his door. He opened it himself, and started on seeing who it was.

"Véra!" he exclaimed. "What imprudence is this? Go back to your room. Think if one of the servants were to see you."

"I cannot help it," I answered. "I must speak to you."

I closed the door behind me. An impatient exclamation was on his lips, but he checked it, and said gently,—

"Not to-night, Véra; not to-night. To-morrow."

"To-morrow will be too late," I answered. "I have seen Lavretsky, and I know all that depends on it."

"You have seen Lavretsky!" he echoed, scarcely able to believe his ears. "When? Where?"

"I followed you last night. Oh, Alexis," flinging myself at his feet,

"have pity on me! Remember how I have loved you!"

He raised me in his arms.

"Do you think I forget it, Véra?"

"Then spare me. Do not break my heart."

His eyes were full of tears. He parted my hair and kissed my forehead.

"Do you remember," he whispered, "that song you used to sing? 'I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more.'"

"But this is not honor," clinging to him. "It is dishonor, shame, and death."

His cheek blanched, but he did not falter.

"Even so, Véra," he answered, "in a good cause."

Could this be Alexis? I marvelled at the change Lavretsky had wrought in him.

"You are determined then?"

"I must."

I released him.

"Go. But remember it is the mother of your child you are dooming to despair."

He was already at the door; in a moment he was by my side.

"Véra! My poor Véra! Is this true? Why did you not tell me sooner?"

"I could not," I murmured.

His arms were round me; my head rested on his shoulder.

"You will not leave me now," I whispered.

His face clouded over.

"I must, Véra. I must meet them. My word is pledged. But I will do nothing without telling you."

"You promise?"

"I promise."

He kissed me twice, unclasped my arms from round his neck and left me.

III.

NELLY'S RECOLLECTIONS (*continued*).

ALEXIS has disappeared. This morning I received a hurried note in pencil from Boris asking me to go to his mother. I found the princess in a great state of mind. Alexis had been out

all night. His bed had not been slept in.

"But, dear princess," I said, "it was thoughtless of Alexis, no doubt, not to leave word, but I do not see anything to be alarmed at. He went out of his own accord. He is old enough to take care of himself."

"You do not know Alexis, Nelly," she answered. "I am always afraid of some *coup de tête*. He is so impetuous, so impatient of control, and as if I had not enough to annoy me, Véra must needs go and fall ill just when I want her most."

"Véra ill?" I exclaimed. "What is the matter with her?"

"I am sure I don't know. An *attaque de nerfs*, I believe — what you English call hysterics."

"May I see her?"

"Certainly, if you wish."

She rang the bell for her maid.

"Take Miss Le Strange to Mademoiselle Blavatsky's room."

"What is it?" I asked the maid directly we were outside the door.

She looked round cautiously before answering.

"Mademoiselle, who was goodness itself, must not repeat it, but there was something between the poor young lady and the young count. Directly she heard he was missing she gave a loud cry and fainted dead away. She has remained in that state ever since. They were afraid to tell the princess."

"Take me to her," I exclaimed.

Véra was stretched on her bed in a death-like swoon, and it was some time before even a faint color stole into her face. After a while she breathed hard once or twice and opened her eyes.

"Nelly!" she exclaimed. "Thank God! I can trust you. Are we alone?"

I looked at the maid, who noiselessly withdrew.

"I must speak or I shall go mad. Alexis is my husband."

"My poor, poor Véra!"

"We were married secretly in Paris four months ago. Perhaps I was wrong, but I loved him so, and I knew the princess would never give her consent. You will not betray us?"

"Never, unless you give me leave."

"He forbade me to tell any one, but he would not mind you. And now he has gone. Oh, Nelly, what shall I do?"

"Do you know where he is?"

"I do not know, but I suspect," wringing her hands. And with a sudden resolution, "Nelly, I must speak to Boris at once."

I rang the bell and desired the maid to ask Prince Labanoff to come to me. Presently Boris appeared, looking pale and disturbed.

"You sent for me," he began, without, I reflected afterwards, manifesting any surprise. Yet the situation was surely an unusual one.

"It was I who sent for you, prince," interrupted Véra. "I have something to say to you—about your brother."

She paused for a moment as though to gather strength, then continued,—

"If you want to find Alexis you must look for Lavretsky."

"Véra!" exclaimed Boris. "Then you did know something after all?"

"I did not when you asked me, but since—but what does it matter?" interrupting herself impatiently. "We are losing time. I have told you. What are you waiting for?"

"Because I must know more," returned Boris firmly. "I cannot work in the dark. What do you know of Lavretsky?"

"I followed them the other night. Your words had made me uneasy. I watched Alexis leave the house and slipped out after him. Lavretsky was waiting for him in the park. I hid behind the bushes. Lavretsky was urging some decision on him to which he was unwilling to agree. At last he promised that he would give his answer the next night—last night."

"Then you knew they were to meet again?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not tell me?"

"I did not dare betray his secrets. He would never have forgiven me. But I did what I could. I spoke to him myself."

"And what did he say?"

"That he must keep his appoint-

ment. His word was pledged. But he would do nothing without telling me."

The color suddenly flamed over her face. She put up her hands to hide it.

"Véra!" exclaimed Boris; "unhappy girl! What does this mean?"

She did not answer.

"I can guess, I fear, only too well. Oh, Véra, why did you not trust me? I would have saved you."

She looked up. Her eyes were glittering with a curious light.

"And suppose I did not wish to be saved?" she said in a hard voice that I scarcely recognized as hers.

"I do not believe you. You are trying to shield him. Great God! that he should have been guilty of such perfidy!"

"Hush!" she interrupted. "Do not dare to blame him. He is accountable to me and to me alone."

He looked at her with a mixture of grief and anger, then turned to me.

"Miss Le Strange," he said, "after what we have just heard this is no place for you. Let me take you to my mother."

But this was more than I could bear.

"Prince," I exclaimed, "you are wrong—utterly wrong! No, Véra, do not be afraid, I will not betray you. She is as innocent as I am. I know all and I tell you so. Will you take my word for it?"

"I would take your word against the whole world," he answered, and his words sent a thrill through my heart. "But are you sure you are not yourself deceived?"

"I am certain."

"Be it so. I will try to believe against appearances for your sake. Véra," he continued, "can you give me no further clue?"

"None," she replied.

He left the room. Véra suddenly burst into tears.

"Oh, Nelly," she sobbed, "is it not hard? They are all alike. Lavretsky was the same. Because I am poor and friendless they think me a wicked woman. The possibility of the truth never enters their mind."

I comforted her as well as I could,

but the wound was a deep one. It was cruel of Alexis to leave her in such a position.

A week has gone by and still there is no news of Alexis. Véra is worn to a shadow with grief and the necessity for concealment. They have not dared to tell the princess about Lavretsky. Boris is doing all he can, but he is obliged to be cautious in his inquiries. It may not be desirable to attract attention to Alexis's movements. Meanwhile, poor Véra has much to bear from the princess, whose anxiety renders her irritable and exacting in the highest degree.

This morning I was arranging the flowers in our little sitting-room when Prince Labanoff was announced.

"I have come to say good-bye, Mr. Le Strange, and to thank you for all your kindness. I am off to St. Petersburg to-night."

"To St. Petersburg!" echoed my father, stupefied.

I felt myself turn pale.

"A plot has been discovered against the emperor's life. Alexis and Lavretsky are implicated in it."

"Foolish lad!" muttered my father under his breath. "Is it wise to run your own head into the lion's mouth?"

"It is my duty," said Boris simply. "I must be on the spot in case there is anything to be done. My mother leaves for Paris to-morrow. She thinks she will hear more quickly there."

"You will lunch with us at any rate," said my father, recovering a little from his surprise. "Don't say no. I will go on first and order it."

He left the room without waiting for an answer. We were alone. Boris took up a paper-knife and began playing with it absently. As for me I could not speak. A weight seemed to hang on my tongue. I busied myself with my flowers, but a mist before my eyes prevented me from seeing them very distinctly. At last Boris broke the silence, which was beginning to grow painful.

"Miss Le Strange," he said, in a voice that trembled a little, "I am go-

ing away on a service of difficulty—perhaps of danger. Let me feel that I have your good wishes and your prayers."

"My prayers you have always," I answered in a low voice. "My good wishes you cannot doubt."

"No——" he hesitated. Then with a sudden resolution, "Miss Le Strange—Nelly—could you ever bring yourself to care for a rough fellow like me?"

I looked up. The next moment he was on his knees before me, kissing my hands.

"Nelly! Nelly! Is it possible that you care for me a little already?"

Before I had time to answer my father opened the door.

"Nelly!" he began. "What is all this?"

Boris sprang to his feet; his face was on fire, but he spoke up like a man.

"Mr. Le Strange, I love your daughter. Will you give me your leave to ask for her hand?"

"You seem to have managed without it," said my father. "What does Nelly say?"

By the tone of his voice I knew that he was not well pleased. I threw my arms round his neck.

"Papa," I whispered, "I will never do anything against your wishes."

"You little traitress!" he exclaimed. "You disarm me. Have I ever refused you anything? There, take her, Boris. But if I had known what you were after you would not have been so welcome."

He walked out on the balcony. My eyes followed him wistfully. We had been all in all to each other for so long. Could I leave him for this stranger whom I had known for such a little while?

"Nelly," said Boris, "I am waiting for your answer."

I turned round. His face was full of trouble and anxiety. He guessed, no doubt, the struggle that was going on in my heart, but he would not say a word to influence my decision. Touched by his forbearance I held out my hand. He took it and kissed it fervently.

"If you knew," he said in a low tone of deep feeling, "how I love you!

You are my ideal of all that is sweet and good. I am not worthy of you, but at least my heart is all yours. I have never loved another woman."

"Well," said my father, coming back; "have you settled it? Let us go to luncheon."

All through the meal he talked incessantly. Boris said very little; his face was radiant, and whenever I looked up I found him watching me.

After luncheon my father went off to see the princess, leaving Boris and me alone together. Time passed quickly, so quickly that we both started when my father entered the room.

"Well, Boris," he said, "I have had rather a time of it with your mother. She declares that you have supplanted your brother. 'I meant her for Alexis,' she informed me. 'Anybody could see that my poor boy was in love with her.' I lost patience at last, and told her that nothing would have induced me to give Nelly to Alexis. He is a mere boy, and his character is quite unformed. She was very indignant at first, but she gradually cooled down."

"I promised to take you round to say good-bye to her, Nelly," he continued. "But if Boris likes to take my place —"

He eagerly agreed. The princess was very kind. She kissed me and blessed me. To Boris she scarcely spoke. Véra waylaid me on the way out. She was looking terribly white and ill, but she kissed me with the greatest affection.

"We shall be sisters, Nelly," she whispered. "I am so glad."

Boris took me home. He did not say much, it was not his way. But he wrung my hand very hard, and I felt a tear on my cheek when he kissed me.

"Good-bye, my Nelly," he murmured. "God keep you." And he was gone.

IV.

VERA'S DIARY (continued).

Avenue des Champs-Élysées, August 10th.—Back again in Paris, where Alexis first told me that he loved me, where the first months of our married life were

passed. It seems like a dream. My God, grant me patience! Four days yet before we can hope to hear from Boris. Four days! four centuries! He is in prison and I cannot reach him. I stretch out my arms and grasp emptiness. My darling! my loved one! you have broken the pledge you gave me, yet how can I reproach you? Would that I alone might bear the punishment! Death or Siberia! The words keep ringing in my ears. Ah, no! I will not believe it. Heaven is merciful. The prayers of the orphan will not be left unheard.

The princess has been kinder to me of late. She kissed me last night.

"You are a good girl, Véra," she said. "You must not mind my being cross. I am so unhappy."

And leaning her head on my shoulder she began to cry, slowly, with the reluctant tears of old age. My heart went out to her.

"Dearest princess," I whispered, "we must hope for the best. God will watch over him."

And in trying to comfort her I seemed to find comfort myself.

August 12th.—The Le Stranges have arrived. They have taken a small apartment close by. Nelly is in and out continually. Her influence over the princess is wonderful. To-day she persuaded her to go for a drive. She had not been out of the house since her return.

August 15th.—A letter from Boris at last. It was Nelly who brought it to me. "It concerns you more than me, Véra," she said, and kissed me. The letter was addressed to the princess. Boris had seen Alexis. He is in prison, awaiting his trial. Lavretsky is with him. He watches him as a cat does a mouse—afraid, Boris thinks, of his revealing the names of his accomplices. Alexis broke down completely when he saw his brother. It is not death he dreads, but Siberia. Confinement and suspense are beginning to tell on him already. His courage is that of action, not of endurance.

August 21st.—A letter from Alexis—to me!

"MY OWN VERA, —

"My trial is approaching. Thank God, my courage has returned to me, and I can meet my fate like a man. Of the issue there is, I fear, little doubt. I must bear the penalty of my folly and my broken faith. All my thoughts now are of you and of what you told me. I have written to my mother —"

I had got thus far when the door burst open and the princess entered the room.

"What is this?" she cried. "What insolent lie is this?"

I rose, trembling.

"What, princess?" I faltered.

"This letter of Alexis. You are his mistress. I have known it all along."

The color flamed over my face.

"Respect your son's wife, princess," I exclaimed, "and the mother of his child."

She grasped my arm.

"Unsay those words," she cried, transported with fury. "Unsay them, or I will kill you with my own hand!"

"I cannot unsay what is true," I answered.

She dragged me to the door. What her purpose was I do not know. A deadly faintness came over me; I closed my eyes; I felt myself sinking from her grasp when suddenly a light form passed between us, and Nelly's voice, full of indignation, sounded in my ears.

"Princess, you forget yourself! Let go her arm. Véra, my poor darling, lean on me!"

She half led, half carried me to the open window. The fresh air restored my scattered senses; I opened my eyes and saw her bending over me like a ministering angel, her soft eyes full of solicitude and compassion.

"You are better now?" she said; "You will not mind if I leave you a moment? I must go to the princess."

I assented, not sorry to be left alone. I still felt weak and giddy after the scene I had gone through. After a while Nelly returned. Her face was very pale, and she looked as though she had been crying.

"Véra," she said, taking my hand,

"will you come home with me? The princess gives you leave. You shall share my room if you do not mind."

She helped me to dress. Indeed I was trembling so much that I could not have done so unaided. I had not asked, nor did she volunteer to tell me, what had passed between her and the princess; but I knew what the latter was like when her anger was roused, and I guessed that the interview had been a trying one. I was ready at last.

A cab was waiting in the courtyard; we got in, Nelly gave the direction, and we drove away.

We found Mr. Le Strange writing in the salon. Nelly took me up to him.

"Father," she said, "this is Alexis's wife; I have brought her home."

He started. I saw that he took in the situation at a glance, but he made no remark, only took my hand and bade me welcome.

I sleep in Nelly's room, but there is a little one leading out of it where I dress. Mr. Le Strange is kindness itself. I did not know who he meant at first when he addressed me as Madame Labanoff. I begged him to call me Véra. Nelly has made me put on my wedding ring. I obeyed her, half reluctantly. I could not help remembering how, on our wedding day, Alexis had hung it on a ribbon round my neck, saying, "Let it lie there, Véra, till the day when I can bid you wear it before them all." The day has come, but, alas! where is Alexis?

August 25th. — Condemned to death! My God! How shall I bear it! Would that my eyes had been struck blind before I read the words! Alexis, my lover, my husband, I cannot live without you, my life is bound up in yours! The stroke that kills you will be my death-blow.

August 28th. — Hope — very faint — a drowning man catches at a straw. A letter from Boris to Nelly.

"All is not lost. We are moving heaven and earth for a reprieve. If we fail there is still a chance, though a desperate one. Tell Véra not to lose heart. I am sending this through the British Embassy bag."

The leaden hours drag by. I watch and wait. Nelly has gone to the princess. I cannot bring myself to leave the house. At any moment news may come.

August 30th. — Last night Nelly startled me from my sleep with a loud cry.

"Boris is in danger. I feel it." She was trembling from head to foot; I tried in vain to calm her.

"I tell you, Véra, I saw him."

"Darling, it was a dream."

"A dream that was sent to warn me. I thought I was walking by the banks of a mighty river. It was night; before me rose a fortress, dark and threatening. A side door opened in the wall, and some one came out wrapped in a great cloak. The light of the moon fell on his face. It was Alexis. He was weeping bitterly. Some one said, "You are safe so far; be cautious." And he answered, "But Boris! Let me go back." But they said, "It is too late." And then the whole wall opened. I saw a prison cell, a straw pallet, and on it a sleeping figure. It was Boris. I stretched out my arms to him; I tried to speak. In vain. My tongue seemed tied. And in the effort I awoke. Oh, Véra," weeping, "what shall I do? I never knew till now how I loved him."

She had broken down completely, all her wonted sweet serenity swept away by the force of a feeling whose power she had never yet owned to herself. Still waters run deep. Her love for Boris had been slowly gathering strength until at this sudden alarm it burst its bounds and carried everything before it. She cried, she wrung her hands like one distracted. I was at my wits' end what to do with her.

"Nelly," I said at last, "the night brings counsel. Wait till the morning. You may see things differently then, and if not we can telegraph."

She caught at my words. Her tears ceased, and presently, worn out by the violence of her emotion, she fell asleep. I too slept at last. When I awoke the sun was high in the heavens, and Nelly was standing by my side, ready dressed. Her face was very pale, but she had regained her usual calmness.

I started up.

"Am I very late?"

"No. We are breakfasting early. I have spoken to father."

"Well?"

"He starts for St. Petersburg in an hour's time."

I suppose my face expressed my amazement. A faint color stole into Nelly's cheek.

"He thinks like you, that I am mad. But he is going all the same. If it is as I fear he may be of use to Boris."

"And you accompany him?"

"No, I will not leave you alone. Besides, I should only hinder him. Will you come in, Véra, or shall I bring you your breakfast here?"

"I will come in. I shall not be long."

I dressed hurriedly, possessed all the time with a feeling of utter bewilderment. Nelly I could understand, but Mr. Le Strange—to undertake so long and toilsome a journey on the faith of a dream! It was passing strange. He was standing by the window in a suit of travelling clothes when I entered the room.

"Well, Véra," he said, smiling, "this is a wild-geese chase, is it not? But I was always an obedient father."

"Always," said Nelly, kissing him, "and now come to breakfast. It is quite ready."

Mr. Le Strange never hurried himself for anything. He ate his breakfast as deliberately as if no impatient cab were waiting at the door to carry him off. When he had finished he rose, and taking Nelly's face in his two hands kissed it fondly.

"Good-bye, my child. Remember, courage and patience. Good-bye, Véra. Take care of one another."

He was gone, and we were left, two lone women, to comfort each other as best we might. Yet my heart felt lighter than it had done for many a day, for in spite of reason and common sense I could not help hoping what, alas! poor Nelly feared.

September 8th. — Alexis is free! He has escaped, thanks to Boris's generous folly. Yes, folly I cannot choose but call it, though my eyes rain tears of

gratitude while I write. Nelly has heard from her father.

"Your presentiment has been most curiously verified. Boris is in prison, and I am afraid he will find it no easy matter to get out. He bribed the gaoler and took his brother's place—a thing that would have been impossible in England. I cannot conceive anything more insane. He narrowly escaped being sent to Siberia. It appears that Alexis's health was sinking under the prolonged strain, and they feared that if the reprieve arrived it would come too late. The gaoler has been thrown into prison. Of course he stoutly denies all knowledge of the matter. But a large sum of money has been found in his room for which he is unable to account and a passport made out in another name. He had evidently determined to make a bolt for it and leave Boris to get out of the scrape as best he might. But they were a little too quick for him.

"Alexis has disappeared. I suppose once out of prison his friends the Nihilists helped him. He will probably make his way to England, the haven of political refugees. It is lucky for him that according to the terms of his father's will he is still under age, otherwise the whole of his property would have been confiscated. As it is, the well-known loyalty of the princess may save it, though this action of Boris tends to complicate matters. The reprieve arrived the day after Alexis's evasion and everything was discovered.

"5 P.M.—I have just come back from seeing the poor lad, having with great difficulty obtained permission. He looks rather pale, and the tears came into his eyes when he spoke of you, but he said he felt sure you would approve of his conduct. He is as comfortable as circumstances will permit, which is not saying much. A Russian prison is not a bed of roses. Lavretsky is with him. I cannot help liking that old rascal in spite of everything.

"I dine to-night at the Embassy and shall leave this open in case there is anything to add."

"12 P.M.—Just returned. Met my

old friend, Brunowsky whom you may remember in Paris years ago. He told me in confidence that he thought the authorities were inclined to hush the matter up, in which case Boris would soon be released with a caution to keep out of the bear's hug for the future. You must take this for what it is worth. I am inclined myself to believe in it."

September 9th.—The princess sent for me this morning. Joy has opened her heart. I would have sunk at her feet but she raised me in her arms. "My daughter," she said, "let us forgive one another." If only we could hear from Alexis, I should have nothing left to wish for.

September 11th.—He has written. He is in England, safe and well. He does not know yet of his reprieve. The princess has telegraphed to him. Tomorrow he may be here.

September 12th.—He has arrived. I can die happy. I have seen my darling's face once more. The princess can hardly bear him out of her sight. He is terribly changed. Those weeks in prison have done the work of years. He is thin and worn, and his eyes have the look of a hunted animal. He cannot bear the slightest allusion to the past. Just now when I would have said something he stopped me.

"If you love me, Véra, help me to forget."

Is forgetfulness possible? Time works wonders, they say. Will he ever again be my bright-faced Alexis of old?

I am back again in my old room, but with what a difference! No longer a dependent, but a daughter of the house.

September 15th.—The news of Lavretsky's execution reached us to-day. We were at luncheon. Alexis rose and abruptly left the room. I followed him, but his door was locked, and he would not let me in. When at last he came out his eyes were red and swollen with weeping, but he made no allusion to what we had heard, and something in his manner imposed silence on us all.

September 17th.—Yesterday Nelly and I were sitting talking together, when the door opened quietly and Boris

came into the room. She started up with a wild cry and threw herself into his arms. I slipped away. When I came back again they were standing by the window, his arm round her waist, her head resting on his shoulder, and such an expression of love and confidence in her eyes as I had never seen in any one's before.

"Boris Ivanovitch," I said, "your mother wishes to see you."

He turned round with a bright smile.

"Véra!" he exclaimed; "my sister Véra," and held out his hand.

I caught it and kissed it before he could prevent me.

"Oh!" I exclaimed passionately, "it is on my knees that I ought to thank you. You perilled your life for his!"

Nelly is transformed. Her face is radiant and her eyes shine like two stars. She talks and laughs incessantly. The princess grew alarmed at the exuberance of her spirits.

"Take care, my child," she said, "much laughing ends in much crying."

"I have cried enough," she answered; "I never mean to cry any more."

May her words be fulfilled! They deserve to be happy both of them. I watched them to-day from the window coming up the Champs-Élysées, her hand resting on his arm, her face upturned to his with an expression that the whole world might read. Alexis joined me.

"We were like that once, Véra," he said with a sigh. "Shall we ever be so happy again?"

I threw my arms round his neck.

"Oh, my love! my darling!" I whispered, "it rests with you. Let me see you content and I envy no one."

From *The National Review*.
SEVEN AND THREE.

NEXT to names, there are few conventional symbols more fascinating to the curious mind, or more bewildering, than numbers. Whether we regard them as the working tools of arithmetic

or as mere arbitrary figures, they can hardly fail, when considered attentively, to impress us with a sense of both awe and admiration. Although to the eye they are small and feeble, they may serve to represent, as we well know, infinitely much. In the form of statistics, for example, the population of a vast continent will occupy, in printed space, something less than a linear inch. The greatest army the world has ever seen, even the fabulous host of Xerxes, can be expressed numerically within the breadth of a thumb-nail; the most prodigious annual income in about half that measurement; the years of the longest life — nay, the extravagant pilgrimage of Methusaleh himself — in one quarter of it. What is more, in three or four seconds it is possible to write down on a slate a total which no human mind can so much as imagine. In a twinkling we range far beyond our powers of computation. A whole regiment of Babbages would fail to count the billions which we are able to represent by means of the Arabic tokens while another is telling a poor score. We are accustomed to hear the infinity of time and space spoken of with a glibness which robs those mysterious phenomena of much of their real solemnity; yet we are perfectly conscious that no effort on our part can avail to make time an hour longer or space a mile wider. It is different with figures. A little reflection shows us that here, at least, we do possess a power which knows no bounds. The result, it is true, may be of no practical value, if not wholly unintelligible, to ourselves when we have produced it; but there it is, and perhaps none the less wonderful in that it conveys no definite meaning. It is strange that the Greeks, with their pantheistic leanings, encouraged no worship at the shrine of a god Arithmos. They recognized and illustrated his influence while they denied him divine honors. Many of the minor deities of both Greece and Rome were revered on weaker and more shadowy grounds than a god of number might have fairly claimed.

If, however, no temple was dedicated to Arithmos in the abstract, there is abundant evidence to prove that not only among the Greeks but by most other peoples, ancient and modern, certain specific numbers have ever been viewed with something akin to religious, or at any rate to superstitious, feeling. Hence they are often called mystic numbers, though the mystery which they involve will not always yield readily to inspection. They appear, as we shall see, amid sets of circumstances of great variety. Even at the present day, when their original significance is altogether forgotten, or, at best, is reduced to the level of mere guess-work, they assert themselves in most unexpected places, the relics of a pathetic credulity which once upon a time had undoubtedly a very strong hold on men's minds. Conspicuous among them are the two whose magic it is proposed to trace, not indeed to its source, but in some of its more obvious developments. We have it on the authority of Bacon that "there is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise." Possibly that shrewd observer would have held that seldom, in small matters, has the predominant folly of mankind been more strongly marked than in the almost universal veneration of seven and three. That such a veneration has existed time out of mind, and still survives, is not to be denied. Consciously or unconsciously, to this day we are charmed by a spell which first began to work when all the world was young.

To the theological student the frequent recurrence of the number seven is well ascertained, or easily ascertainable. If he is sceptical, let him consult a concordance. He finds it in Genesis, and he finds it in Apocalypse. Between those extremes he is constantly coming upon new examples of the same strange preference. Although modern geologists have taught us to believe that the "days" of the Creation were probably periods of time to be represented by nothing short of thousands, perhaps millions, of years, they have not hitherto seriously attempted to shake our

faith in the number of such periods, howsoever protracted they may have been. We are still free to accept the assurance that they were six, and that on the seventh the Creator rested from his work. Some of us, also, are inclined to suppose that from the story of the Creation has been deduced the hebdomadal division of days into weeks. Others think that this is due to lunar observation, which naturally, they argue, led to a division of the month into periods of seven days, or four quarters of seven days each. According to Dion Cassius, the Egyptians were the first to refer those days to the seven planets. Be this how it may, it cannot be disputed that the first total of which we read in Holy Writ is seven. A little farther on in Genesis seven-fold vengeance is denounced on the slayer of Cain, if such a one should be found. Pharaoh's dream of the kine and the ears of corn is familiar to the least biblical of readers. Balaam, again, demands seven altars, and, for victims, seven bullocks and seven rams. Seven years did Jacob serve for Rachel; and seven times, in his nervous apprehension, he bows himself before the outraged Esau. Nebuchadnezzar's furnace was heated "one seven times more than it was wont to be heated" for the faithful three. Seven priests with seven trumpets marched round the doomed Jericho. Seven times did Elijah's servant look, at his master's bidding, seaward. For no special reason that we can detect, seven was the chosen number of deacons. In the Book of the Revelation we should expect to find most frequent reference to whatever is mystic and symbolical, numbers included; nor are we disappointed. The very first chapter introduces us to the seven Churches of Asia, the seven golden candlesticks, and the seven stars; and throughout the book the same numerical identity is constantly meeting us. The Bible, in short, in both Old and New Testaments, and in Apocrypha to boot, is full of similar instances: from the seven "of every clean beast" taken into the ark to the sluggard who is wiser in his

own conceit than "seven men that can render a reason," from Jethro's seven daughters to Sceva's seven sons. There is no need to multiply instances. Those who care may read and count them with little trouble in Cruden and his editors.

Nations which had nothing else in common with the Hebrews were equally addicted to this numeral. One of the earliest tales of the heroes celebrates the disastrous expedition of Polynices and his six companions against Thebes, the subject of a play of Æschylus, and the origin of the modern nickname "*Septem Contra Christum*" given some years ago to the authors of "*Essays and Reviews*." The starry firmament was laid under contribution for several chapters of the old mythology. Thus the Pleiades furnished one legend, the Hyades another, and the Great Bear or Seven Plough-oxen a third; and in all three the same odd number is prominent. In Roman history the tradition of the early kings is no longer accepted as literal fact. Like many another fable once implicitly believed, it has been unable to withstand the sieve of nineteenth-century criticism. There it is, nevertheless; and the kings are seven, even as the hills which their city eventually covered. Wisdom, again, was held to have resided pre-eminently in that favored band which has ever since been familiar to us as the Seven Sages. The Wonders of the World — those, that is to say, of man's own contrivance; for the mightier achievements of nature were not yet regarded — were not in ancient times permitted to exceed the same numerical limit. It was not once or twice stronger, but seven times, that the giant Antæus grew for each contact with his mother-earth; it was seven youths and seven maidens that formed the periodical tribute paid to the inexorable Minotaur.

Leaving mythology, and turning to what is more or less accredited fact, we need still be at no loss for illustrations. We may notice the seven days *fête* in honor of Apis, the Egyptian deity. Herodotus, among the many scraps of

information, authentic and otherwise, which he brought away with him from the banks of the Nile, mentions a mode of plighting faith in vogue with the Arabs of the desert. "When two men would swear a friendship," he says, "they stand on each side of a third; he with a sharp stone makes a cut on the inside of the hand of each near the middle finger, and, taking a piece from their dress, dips it in the blood of each, and moistens therewith seven stones lying in the midst." It is useless to speculate as to what may have been the mystical significance of such a ritual. Who knows whether it is even yet extinct? — for the Ishmaelites are not given to change. The same love of the lucky seven is, at any rate, to be traced in the religious belief of those who, so many centuries later, inhabit those dreary wastes. Votaries of the Moslem faith recognize an inferior class of angels, called *Moakkibat*. Two of these are appointed to keep watch over every mortal, one on either hand. Islam teaches that at the close of each day the attendant spirits fly up to heaven with a detailed account of their ward's proceedings. Every good action is recorded ten times; but when a sin is committed the one says to the other, "Forbear for seven hours to record it; peradventure he may repent and pray and obtain forgiveness." The creed of the Mussulman likewise provides for seven stages in the place of punishment after death, which may be reasonably compared with Dante's somewhat similar plan of seven *gironi* in his "*Purgatorio*," and the patristic scheme of seven cardinal virtues and as many vices. Finally, who has not heard of the seventh heaven?

In addition to those instances, which for the most part bear on myth and religion, there are many sevens which refuse to be classified under any special head. We may, if we please, regard them as mere coincidences or as unconscious imitations of a partiality which has existed from time immemorial. In any case, they are curious and interesting; and they are of almost infinite variety. If, for example, we

look into a catalogue of chapbooks, the chances are that we are very soon confronted with "The Seven Wise Masters of Rome," or "The Seven Famous Champions of Christendom." If we look at a family of young children, we are reminded, if we still retain our Aristotle and Quintilian, that seven is the age at which those thoughtful men, both of them well experienced in the instruction of youth, recommended that a child's education should begin. Again, the Seven Ages of man appear to us a perfectly natural division of human life, and we are quite willing to fall in with the theory that our bodies are wholly renewed every seven years until they reach the grand climacteric. Our popular fairy-tales make great capital out of their sevens and threes. How many legendary families consist of seven brothers and a sister, or of three brothers, of whom the youngest invariably wins the highest honors in the end, usually marrying the king's daughter and living in ideal happiness ever afterwards? Who fails to recall the strange adventures of the man who made a memorable journey to St. Ives and met by the way an extraordinary number (but always a multiple of seven) of "kits, cats, sacks, and wives"? What are we to say of the two acts which have been passed in the course of our history to regulate the duration of a British Parliament? Is it for nothing that they are known to us as the Septennial and the Triennial? To what fascination is it owing that they were not the Biennial and the Quinquennial? There is not much sentiment, as a general rule, to be extracted from a legal document, and mysticism is the very thing which it seeks, though not always with success, to exclude. How is it, then, that leases are so often drawn for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years? Perhaps, after all, the gentlemen of the long robe are unwittingly encouraging a prejudice which was in full bloom many centuries before either lease or lawyer arose. An equivalent coincidence, if it be nothing more, we may distinctly trace in most of the old indentures by which apprentices were bound.

A servitude of seven years was the rule, almost without exception; and it obtains to this day. Even arithmetic itself is not without symptoms of the influence exercised by the weird number. In logarithmic tables the results are commonly worked out to seven places of decimals, and no farther. The die of the Roman gambler, like that of his British representative, was so marked that the sum of the dots on any two opposite faces was always seven. The musical scale is another case in point. It is to the combinations of a simple series of seven notes that we primarily owe the masterpieces of Mozart and of Beethoven.

In the very place-names of the world this characteristic has often been turned to account. Thus, Middle Egypt was called by the Greeks *Heptanomis*; and *Septempeda*, now *San Severino*, was a Roman municipium in the territory of Picenum. In modern geographical nomenclature we have the Rhenish *Siebengebirge*, the Sardinian *Sette Fratelli*, and our own *Sevenoaks*, *Sevenhampton*, *Seven Sisters*, and many others. In Evelyn's "Diary," under date October 5, 1694, we read: "I went to see the building near St. Giles, where seven streets make a star from a Doric pillar placed in the middle of a circular area." This, in after years, became the notorious Seven Dials. It would be easy to go on adding to the list indefinitely.

Instances enough have been cited to prove that, whether by accident or by design, seven has always been a favorite numeral; sometimes with a symbolical flavor, as in the masonic Seven Stars; sometimes with a mythical, as in the Seven Sleepers; sometimes with a comical, as in Touchstone's famous "quarrel on the seventh cause."

It is time to pass on to the consideration of that other number which, whilst in its usage it resembles seven, is yet more closely interwoven with our ideas, both sacred and profane. Besides being the most solemn symbol in various religious creeds, it enters with ridiculous pertinacity into endless subjects of our daily conversation.

The number three was regarded as

possessing a mystic significance by many ancient people—notably by the Assyrians and Egyptians—and the modern Chinese go so far as to attribute to it omnipotent creative virtue. According to the Chinaman's theory, one produced two, two produced three, and three produced all things. A somewhat similar doctrine is that of a writer quoted, not without derision, by Archbishop Whately. "This three-fold constitution of ideas," he says, "is universal. Three-in-one is the law of all thought and of all things. Nothing has been created, nothing can be thought, except upon the principle of three-in-one. Three-in-one is the deepest-lying cipher of the universe." Without waiting to expound this dogma, we may admit that no number is so generally as three associated with the various religious systems which have been in vogue throughout the world's history. Besides the Christian Trinity, there have been Assyrian triads, sundry Hindoo three-fold combinations, such as that of Brahmah, Vishnu, and Siva, and others well known to students. It is not, however, the theological importance of the number that most peremptorily arrests our attention. What is even stranger, and perhaps more generally interesting, is that this little numeral is perpetually cropping up in every conceivable connection. It is obviously nature's favorite, and it occurs more frequently than any other in the purely artificial classifications of man.

In those epidemics of genius which, from time to time, have illumined a specially favored age or people, this peculiarity has always been very strongly marked. *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides* were all born within a period—brief for the exhibition of such a galaxy of dramatic talent—of five-and-forty years, and Greece gave us no other tragic poet of any note. In like manner, her three greatest philosophers followed each other in rapid succession, the second being the pupil of the first, even as the third sat at the feet of the second; and there have been none in later or in earlier times

worthy to be placed in the same rank with *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Aristotle*. It is the same with the classics of mediæval Italy. It has been truly said of *Dante*, *Petrarca*, and *Boccaccio*, that they are the three main sources of the beautiful, the true, and the great in Italian literature. In the very words of the critic, "i tre fonti principali onde si deriva tutto cio che han di bello, di vero, e di grande le lettere italiane." Yet from the "*Divina Commedia*" to the "*Decameron*" there was a space of barely fifty years. Even when we range farther afield and cover many centuries of history, we find the same fatality not seldom exemplified. Take the "three poets in three distant ages born." Will there ever be a fourth whose epic shall dispute the palm with that of *Homer*, or with that of *Virgil*, or with that of *Milton*? Where shall we look for the founder of a creed which is any way comparable, whether in popularity or in intrinsic merit, with Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, the three systems practised, with greater or less strictness, by more than nine-tenths of the world's population? Ethnographers are accustomed to divide mankind into three great families, which, they say, are indicated by Nature herself; while all terrestrial objects, animate and inanimate, are referred to one or another of the three so-called kingdoms which, in truth, represent, each one of them, a realm more densely populated than that of any human sovereign.

If we turn to the old mythology, the three bias is there, as we very soon discover, in still greater force than the seven. Mythology is a museum of trios. What consternation would ensue were it suddenly brought to light that, after all, there was a fourth Grace! An addition to, or subtraction from, the number of the *Furies* we might possibly endure; but it would seem little short of sacrilege were we constrained to tamper with the roll-call of the *Fates*. Who could ever bear to add one to the grim company of *Clotho*, *Lachesis*, and *Atropos*, or to impair the triple perfection of *Euphrosyne* and her

sisters? The Sirens, the Harpies, the Gorgons, again, all attest the favor with which the mysterious three was regarded long before history and chronology came into being. The Judgment of Paris turns on precisely the same point, and the Judgment of Paris must now be something like three thousand years old. In the pale kingdoms of Dis we are met by the three-headed Cerberus, and the bench of three judges, Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Æacus, or, as some say, Achilles, the name of one of whom at least has passed into a proverb for justice without mercy. It is here, too, that we find Hecate, the title in the lower world of a goddess known on earth as Diana, and on high as Luna. Moreover, her chapels are wont to be erected, as a subordinate name, *Trivia*, indicates, at the junction of three ways. Perhaps the famous riddle of the Sphinx, which only an Ædipus could solve, owed its celebrity in some measure to its tripartite character. The legend of the Sibylline books certainly loses none of its mystery or interest by the prominence it gives to three and its multiples, for is not the same number inseparably connected with the groundwork of our own religious belief? We readily recognize its peculiar fitness as a symbol of profound solemnity. Similarly, we accept without demur the tale of the Horatii and Curiatii — not implicitly believing that such a contest ever really happened, but welcoming the mystic number of combatants on either side as being in harmony with our own estimate of triads. The birth of a mighty nation is heralded, happily enough by the introduction at the outset of an internecine conflict, if conflict there must be, between powers of three. With equal satisfaction we acquiesce in the story of Horatius and his two comrades who so doubtfully withstood the assault of Lars Porsena "in the brave days of old."

We apportion our earth among three zones, and mathematical formulæ remind us at every turn of the natural propensity of geometrical figures to fall into classes which are too many for two and not enough for four. The triangle,

which is significant of so much, may be taken as the basis of three-fold division. Of all symbolical figures it is probably the most popular. Its mathematical value is proved by the fact that it gives its name to a complete branch of geometrical study. Its angles can be measured in three ways, and only three; according to the size of those angles, it is acute, or right-angled, or obtuse; according to the proportionate length of its sides, it is equilateral, or isosceles, or scalene. Similarly, the sections of the cone result in the parabola, the hyperbola, the ellipse; and the algebraical progressions are three. Above all, there are the three dimensions; and the ingenuity of many generations of mathematicians has not hitherto availed to discover, with any approach to certainty, a fourth. In mensuration we reckon by linear, square, and cubic feet; our weights are troy, avoirdupois, and pharmacetical.

Grammar, to some minds the least sentimental of all known studies, tells a like tale. Dry and unsympathizing though it be, it cannot resist the all-pervading influence of one, two, three. Its genders, persons, numbers, voices, follow the common rule; its positive, comparative, and superlative degrees can never be exceeded or curtailed. Its cases, it is true, are in Aryan languages usually more than three; but in the original system, the Sanscrit, which has the full complement, including locative and instrumental, they may be fairly called seven, for nominative and vocative are really one; and seven and three are both mystic numbers. Logicians and grammarians between them have decided that every proposition may be so dissected that ultimately it becomes simply subject, predicate, and copula. Logic itself exhibits the products of thought as terms, as propositions, as inferences; and a syllogism consists of two premisses and a conclusion. Mathematics in its narrow, modern sense, consists of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry.

In fact, look where we will, the irrepressible self-assertion of this numeral is continually forced upon our notice,

or would be so forced if we were not long habituated to its prevalence and its utility. Dating, as we have seen, from the dim distance of the mythological age, and passing through the several regions of religious faith, history, and science, it has finally entered into all the details of common life, and is now quite indispensable. If the idea of three were suddenly expunged from the human brain, we should be in the dark. The Christian doctrine could no longer be taught; the division of governments into despotisms, limited monarchies, and republics, would become meaningless; we should be unable to appreciate the formula of "King, Lords, and Commons." We should be lost as regards precedence in the orders in our Church; we could no longer distinguish bishop from priest, or priest from deacon. Churchmen High, Churchmen Low, and Churchmen Broad would become hopelessly jumbled. Even the main arteries of modern Christianity, the Protestant, the Romish, and the Greek, would cease to be distinguishable. We should have to abandon the favorite legend of the Three Kings of Cologne; gold, frankincense, and myrrh would be bereft of their significance; faith, hope, and charity would be an impossible sisterhood. The three R's once formed the brief bill of fare of the humblest education. Board school French and pianos have caused us to enlarge our ideas in this respect, and the *Dreikaiserbundniss* (expressive word!) of reading, writing, and arithmetic is dissolved. It leaves us, however, an inexhaustible stock of instances. Take away our three, and where would be our botanical arrangement of annuals, biennials, and perennials? What would become of the farmer without his rotation of grain, grass, and roots? What notion could be formed of Nelson's victories, won with three-masted ships carrying three tiers of guns—a three-fold cord which was not quickly broken? The schoolboy would be puzzled to attach its due import to the terrible line:

Aut disce, aut discede; manet sors tertia,
cedi.

Nothing, in short, could compensate us for the disappearance of three. That once gone, a good half of our most fondly cherished conceptions, if not more, would be irretrievably wrecked. It is scarcely too much to say that in three, and what three involves to us, the essence of our life, spiritual and secular, reposes. Any numeral could be more cheerfully dispensed with. Number 1 might be removed. As individuals we should probably feel the difference; but the world at large would not be incommoded. The obliteration of Number 2 would entail a readjustment of matrimonial relations, and peradventure a relapse into polygamy, together with other difficulties which would not be smoothed away in a minute. Without three we should be altogether helpless. Being neither beneath the loftiest intellect nor above the lowest, it is the total into which our imagination naturally falls. Whether we regard it in the aspect of A, B, C, or in that of sun, moon, and stars, we feel instinctively that it is, and must always be, essential not only to our well-being, but to our being at all.

We shall, however, be better able to estimate its value if we proceed to enumerate a few of the commonplace examples in which we have long been pledged to its use; otherwise it might, perhaps, be supposed that only in scientific classifications or other like divisions of a more or less abstruse character could its frequency be fairly noted. We have not far to look. Every time we take a railway journey we are brought face to face with the invidious process of distinguishing passengers by means of a sliding-scale of fares and accommodation. It was not thus in the very earliest days of railway enterprise, which contemplated only two grades of customers. Soon, nevertheless, the irresistible hankering after a *tertium quid* made it necessary to enlarge the programme; and we have now for many years enjoyed the privilege of a first class, a second, and a third. The same principle is brought home to us by the division of time in

the scholastic world. The three terms in the year, though not to the advantage of parents' pockets and boys' prospects, are now universal. Among the publishers, again, the same influence, subtle and mysterious, has long been busily at work. What are the books chiefly read in this country, and in what shape are they issued to the public? They are three-volume novels. The few books which venture to appear in a less pretentious form are merely the exceptions. There is no obvious reason why the great majority of novels should not be compressed into a single volume. It is to this condition that they invariably descend if their performance in the fashionable pattern shall have proved encouraging. Why are they *ter-voluminous* in the first instance? According to Chesterfield, a novel is "a little gallant history, which must contain a great deal of love, and not exceed one or two small volumes." The heroes and heroines of our most modern fiction comply with the first half of the definition; but they are apt to overstep the limit prescribed in the second. They are fond of bold type and bolder margins, more worthy of some grand classic than of the lives and loves of characters created to-day and forgotten to-morrow.

The good old fashion of sign-boards, which once swung over every shop door, is now practically confined to those houses which deal mainly in fluid comforts — fluid, and fleeting also. We may deplore this monopoly on the part of the licensed victualler; but the historical interest of the signs is as great as ever. Here the number three is once more in the front rank. There are on record no fewer than sixty-nine examples of it in this company. Here we find the "Three Angels," and there the "Three Merry Devils;" in one street the "Three Admirals," in the next the "Three Washerwomen." An exhaustive catalogue of the patron saints thus set forth in triplicate would be tedious; but it includes Ravens, Roses, Turks, Tuns, Crowns, Squirrels, Hats, and Blackbirds. The complete list is to be read in Hotten's elaborate "History of Signboards." There is

one, however, which deserves especial mention. This is the "Three Legs," once the sign of Thomas Cockerill, a bookseller, over against Grocers' Hall, in the Poultry. It represented, of course, the Manx arms; and, in order to accentuate the mysticism, Mr. Cockerill, we are told, was in the habit of describing the house on the title-pages of his publications as the "Three Legs and Bible." The wit of the combination, it must be owned, is not visible on the surface. Possibly he was thinking of the three parts of the Bible — Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocrypha — each of which might be fancifully viewed as a moral and religious "leg," or support. Some element of relevancy must surely have lurked in the legend. The improved edition of the sign is no longer popular; but the Legs without the Bible still proclaim certain alehouses. Perhaps, amid the circumstances, it is as well that they have parted company. The "three balls" are a familiar symbol above the portal of an establishment which with us corresponds to the Parisian *Mont de Piété*. It may be thought that they would be fitly superseded by the warning inscribed over the entrance of Dante's Inferno. In these highly educated days it is scarcely needful to add that, instead of being, as was once commonly believed, the arms of Lombardy, they formed part of the armorial bearings of the Medici, from whose states, and from Lombardy, the first bankers came. Their influence may be traced in the name and in the business of Lombard Street. The balls were originally blue, and it is only within the present century that they have been gilded. According to Mr. Hotten, the popular interpretation of their existence (for they lost their ancient significance long ago) is that there are two chances to one that whatsoever passes under them will never be redeemed.

Nature has made our lives past, present, and future; and moralists in all ages, from Socrates to the All Souls' dial, with its "*Pereunt et imputantur*," have impressed upon mankind the solemn message of time and his tenses.

The Romans kept up some semblance of a tripartite division by means of their monthly Kalends, Nones, and Ides, while later nations have had recourse to seven-day weeks. It is quite possible, however, to point to traces of the inborn love of three in our modern computation of time also, and even in business matters, where its fascination might have been expected to have little scope. In the operation known as "bill-discounting" allowance is made for what are called days of grace, three of which are granted before payment can be legally claimed. In London, and perhaps in the provinces, one of the most usual arrangements for letting houses is on a three-years agreement. A more extended tenancy involves a lease, as above noticed, for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years — an association of the two mystic numbers. It is remarkable that in so prosaic a domain as that of the house-agent these two should be precisely the numbers which enter most frequently into our calculations. Of late years, again the ruling passion has asserted itself in that popular, but possibly not over-wise, method of doing business so widely advertised as "the three-years system." Why not two, or four, or five? Some "odious" force, of which they were themselves unconscious, compelled the piano-dealers and furniture-brokers to fix on three, and an arrangement which included for this purpose a greater period or a less would now be regarded with suspicion. Who ever got up and proposed two or four "cheers for the queen"? The very crier thrice delivers, or delivered, his Norman "*Oyez!*" Instinctively the auctioneer, in his most moving tones, delays the inevitable end with his "Going, going, — gone!"

We are much attached to the principle of three grades in our dignities, whether civil or military. The mayor of the county town has aldermen and councillors under him, and government offices almost invariably employ three classes of clerks. Nay, are there not — *parvis componere magna* — three grades in the Most Honorable Order of

the Bath, which, after all, derives its title from nothing grander than the homely ablution which preceded the installation of knights — for cleanliness was not always next to godliness? Its motto, too, is "*Tria Juncta in Uno.*" There are three stages of generalship; of admiralty, likewise, three. A Parliamentary bill is in similar plight; thrice must it issue triumphant from the strife of parties before it can become law. So it is with matrimony, according to the rubric of the Established Church; for, unless the mean advantage of a license be taken, the banns of the contracting parties must be thrice published before the ceremony can be performed. Despite continual protest, the only public vehicles available in the streets of London are the omnibus, the "growler," and the hansom. There is the tram; but it more fitly belongs to another triad, the two other members of which are the ordinary railroad and the electric development of more recent times. Our medium of currency is succinctly written £ s. d. Our very beer is marked X, XX, XXX. If, unhappily, we enjoy no privilege like that embodied in the *Jus trium liberorum* of Roman law, we are, on the other hand, no longer liable to a *trinoda necessitas*. We have the unrestricted use of pen, ink, and paper, which privilege makes our newspaper press alike the most free and the most honorable in the world; while the liberty of the subject is so untrammelled that our public parks, on every Sunday in the year, are the happy hunting ground and rostrum of the tag, rag, and bobtail of the metropolis. Whatever the music may be, a major or minor third is seldom absent.

Finally, the titles of books, especially of novels, tend to show that the race of fiction-mongers is not impervious to the same magnetic attraction. In former times, as has already been mentioned, we had the "Seven Champions of Christendom" and other examples of the septenary influence; and recently there has been a decided revival in favor of three. The books of which this monosyllable helps to form the

superscription are not, as a rule, among the immortal works of our greatest authors. What they lack in quality, however, they supply in numerical strength. To mention them all in detail would be to transcribe some pages of a library catalogue. For the sake of brevity, we may begin with Trollope's "Three Clerks," continue with Black's "Three Feathers," and conclude with "Three Men in a Boat," or "Soldiers Three." This practice is quite consistent. Many authors deliver not only their titles, but their pet sentiments also, with reference, implied or expressed, to the unseen power. While one writer assures us that happiness consists in the judicious union of a faith, an occupation, and a home, another says that we must not look for success unless we can command confidence, ability, and opportunity. This is the *ter beatus* of the poets. The makers of proverbs are seldom to be discovered. Their handiwork, as we know, "is one man's wit, and all men's wisdom," and, therefore, soon becomes public property; but they, too, whosoever they were, made capital out of our two numerals. "Seven brothers in a council," the Spaniard says, "make wrong right;" "Three know it, all know it," the Italian found; that "Three removals are as bad as a fire," we ourselves are quite convinced.

Pliny, the naturalist, if occasionally rather wide of the mark, is always observant and suggestive. "Cur impares numeros," he asks, "ad omnia vehementiores credimus?" If he had given an answer to his own question we should have been forever grateful. Alas! he is silent. He merely cites as an example of the superior energy of odd numbers the fact that on those days men's fevers are invariably worse. He cannot explain the tertian. Modern physicians cannot explain why typhoid fever reaches its crisis on the seventh day, or on the fourteenth, or on the twenty-first. Pliny was probably not conscious that his "Historia Naturalis" was itself published in the seventy-seventh year of the Christian calendar,

perhaps the "oddest" that was open to him in his generation. What would he have thought of that famous Lambach Church, triangular, three-towered, three-windowed, having three doors, three façades, three organs, three altars in marbles of three colors, three sacristies, costing, it is said, 333,333 florins, and dedicated to the Trinity? The force of superstition could surely go no further. He knew, however, the story of Cæsar, who, having had a carriage accident, secured a safe journey ever afterwards by means of a simple expedient—*carmine ter repetito*.

By this time, all save the most hardened sceptic must confess how persistently the seven and the three have entered, and do still enter, into human affairs. Instances are so common, so ready to our hand, that as Rosalind suggests to Orlando, we are not "gravelled for lack of matter." Such an extraordinary array of coincidences must really point to a common principle. What that principle, or prejudice, may be, we cannot with certainty determine. A faint glimmer of it, however, we can discern. We are not quite in Cimmerian darkness. We cannot exclaim joyfully, with Teufelsdröckh, "Es leuchtet mir ein!" We feel, rather than know, that it is not owing to mere chance that those two remarkably odd numbers enter so frequently into mortal calculations. We are sometimes told that seven is often used in the Bible to express an indefinite number. Who can answer the plain question, "Why?" In the Book of Job a precise account is given of that patriarch's possessions both before and after the grievous trial in the course of which his three friends—three again—comforted him so sorrowfully. We read that his latter end was more blessed than his beginning. His flocks and herds were exactly doubled. The number of his family, however, and the proportion of males and females, remained exactly the same, as if incapable of improvement. Moreover, both number and proportion are significant. "He had also seven sons and three daughters."

ARTHUR GAYE.

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SOME ENGLISH CHARACTERS IN FRENCH FICTION.

THACKERAY somewhere said that he once thought of collecting together all the lies which the French had propagated about the British and the British about the French during the period of the Napoleonic wars. Very curious and diverting we can imagine such a narrative would have been from the pen, and doubtless the pencil also, of our great satirist; not without value too as an historical document, for surely our sober, truth-seeking chroniclers have somewhat neglected the importance of the lie as in one form or another it has affected the destinies of Europe. Apart, however, from so grave a work—which might be styled indifferently “The History of Misrepresentation” or “The Misrepresentation of History,” and which, to be adequate, ought (in the case of the aforesaid nations) to begin at least as early as the Hundred Years’ War—apart from this there remains the question of international appreciation as expressed in purely unpolitical literature. Here of course the field is immensely narrowed; indeed, by eliminating politics we seem (as Aristotle would have said) to be cutting ourselves off from the perennial source of lies. And even with this restriction it would be necessary, lest the subject should reach an impracticable size, to set aside the works of all those foreigners who, whether as residents in England or as intelligent visitors, deliver their opinions upon us with the real or presumed authority of specialists. Nevertheless, though thus limited to the humbler sphere of professed fiction, we fancy that the diligent compiler might amass, even in the lightest of literature and most peaceful of periods, a store of *obiter dicta* worthy to be placed on permanent record. Let us indicate in brief the course which he would have to take.

Suppose, for example, that a beginning were made with the Peace of Paris; a date as unimpeachable as the Equator itself, since when, as the opti-

mist is never weary of repeating, England and France have been rivals only in the work of progress and civilization. By way of preface our author would have to remark that the traditional idea of the brutal and perfidious Saxon, with his *morgue*, his *hauteur*, his *flegme*, and his many other unpleasant qualities, was in full force at this epoch, quickened by innumerable caricatures. Before long, however, our neighbors discovered that the Englishman might be used as well as abused. Being a great traveller, he took advantage of the peace to visit a country in which he gave himself somewhat the airs of a conqueror, an assumption naturally galling to the inhabitants, yet not without its compensations. For the conqueror scattered his money right royally, taking no thought for the change, and made the fortunes of countless tradesfolk and innkeepers. Every Briton in those good Restoration days was *Milord*, and pretty dearly he paid for the honor. Do you know the story of the Englishman and the dog, an exception which may be quoted to prove the rule? He was staying, this countryman of ours, in a small provincial town not a hundred miles from Paris, when his fancy was taken by a dog (of what species we are not told) which was wandering about the hotel. By inquiry from the landlord he ascertained that the animal belonged to a young lad of the place, who would doubtless be willing to part with him for a consideration. So a messenger was despatched to summon the boy, who on entering found the visitor, a large and florid person, reclining in an easy-chair beside a table whereon lay the fragments of a meal that might apparently have served for six hungry people. Then a dialogue ensued in which the Englishman in his own style of French intimated his desire to purchase the dog. Pyrame’s owner was quite agreeable, and indeed pressed him as a free gift upon the stranger. The latter of course would not hear of this, and proposed various handsome prices which the generous boy refused as far too high. Eventually a calculation was made based on the probable

cost of keep for two years (the time during which the dog had belonged to his present owner), and five napoleons was settled as the figure, much to the disgust of mine host of the Boule d'Or, who had assisted at the bargain expecting his own commission and intimating by various winks and frowns that now if ever was the time to fleece the foreigner. One difficulty alone marred harmony of this transaction. "Ho ! Pyrame, bong chien, suivez-moa," cried the Englishman ; but Pyrame did not budge. The boy, however, was equal to the occasion. "It is the accent, milord," he said. "He is not yet accustomed to your accent, but he will soon get into it." "Bong !" replied the other. "Ce chien est à moa ;" and the affair was concluded.

We have mentioned the name of the dog. Let us add that the ingenuous youth was none other than the great Alexandre Dumas at the age of fourteen, and that our report of the transaction is (perhaps needless to say) his own. And it is manifest that from this little episode certain characteristics may be deduced which went to compose in the eyes of Frenchmen a very familiar type of the Englishmen of that period, — a large eater, a wealthy and open-handed sportsman, a fearless adventurer in an alien tongue.

From this point it is no long step to the literary movement of 1830. Nothing was more natural or creditable than that the leaders of that movement, professing so great a debt to English literature, should desire to initiate their countrymen into the manners and customs *d'outre-manche*. Did not the master himself employ a drama taken from our history as the means of publishing the principles of the new school ? Did he not search "Franc Baronum," and we know not how many other strange authors, in order to ensure an accurate presentment of "Marie Tudor" ? And did he not finally in that marvellous romance of "L'Homme qui Rit" devote all his erudition and all his poetic fancy to the invention of English names and the description of English customs which have never had

any existence ? Nor were his henchmen behind him in similar efforts. Every one will remember that Dumas (to mention that great man once more) made the hero of his most celebrated novel assume at one stage the *alias* of an English nobleman, — a character which served equally well to explain both the count's reserved air and his magnificent horses. Other persons and scenes of our country are to be found in the pages of Dumas' historical novels ; he had an affection for us which sometimes outstripped his knowledge, as when on one occasion he despatched a young couple, seeking peace and seclusion, to a cottage in Piccadilly. But nothing in this way is so remarkable as the characters with which he enriched dramatic literature. Who can forget how, at "a borough in Northumberland," called Darlington, Richard of that name met at the hustings his rival "Sir Stanson" ! How, while the issue of the voting was still doubtful there suddenly appeared sailing up the river a ship bringing to the poll a load of Sir Stanson's supporters ; how at this critical moment, by a masterstroke of policy, the captain of the vessel was bribed to put out to sea again, and so Sir Stanson lost his votes and the Blues triumphed ; how in Parliament Richard so distinguished himself that overtures were made to him by the most exalted persons ; and how, in the midst of his success, his steps were dogged by the mysterious figure of Mawbray, lurking in cabinets and behind tapestries, appearing at the most inopportune moments, and finally (as the curtain falls) revealing to Richard his awful identity, "your father — *le bourreau !*" Bare justice compels us to admit that in this drama, represented for the first time at the Porte St. Martin on December 10th, 1830, Parisian playgoers were enabled in the space of three hours to learn such details of English public life as they would not perhaps have acquired from ever so long a residence in this country.

After "Richard Darlington" came "Kean," with its appropriate sub-title

of "Désordre et Génie ;" with its select and fashionable circle headed by the Prince of Wales ; with that all-powerful official of whom Dumas was so fond, *le constable* ; with the great actor himself through whose erratic personality we make acquaintance with Mr. Peter Patt of "The Coal Hole," John Cooks *le boxeur*, Ketty *la blonde*, and other humble friends. But of "Kean" it would be impertinent to speak, remembering in what masterly fashion it has already been handled in "The Paris Sketch Book ;" nor do we propose to consider here the Englishman of the French stage who (except he be taken from history) is for the most part a commonplace and stereotyped figure, an accusation which certainly cannot be brought against either Richard Darlington or Kean.

But let us not forget, in mentioning Hugo and Dumas, to express our gratitude to Théophile Gautier for introducing us (in "Milord") to that "spruce, clean-shaved Englishman, with his white cravat, his waterproof and macintosh, *l'expression suprême de la civilisation*." Sir Edwards was his name, and it was partly by the elegance and multiplicity of his travelling apparatus that he won the heart of Doña Feliciano, who was dazzled by "the pen-knife which would also serve as a razor or corkscrew or spoon or fork ; by the inkstand from which you could evolve candles, wafers, sealing wax ; by the walking-stick which could be converted at pleasure into a chair ; and by a thousand other patent inventions of a similar sort which the sons of perfidious Albion (the people who of all others require the most utensils for living) carry about with them in well-appointed trunks from the Arctic Pole to the Equator." No less elaborate (though of course the lady could not know this) was the baronet's toilet-equipment, "compared to which the united instrument-cases of a surgeon, a dentist, and a chiropodist would have seemed insignificant." Moreover Sir Edwards was a model of punctuality, "keeping his appointments with a regularity which put to shame the easy-

going chronometers of Madrid." He was a man of wide possessions also, and he pictured to his Spanish bride how delightful it would be, as a change from Almack's and Hyde Park, "to pass the summer (!) in my villa at Calcutta, or at the Cape of Good Hope where I have a cottage." And she on her side was charmed with the vista of "powdered domestics, a four-in-hand, *porcelaines de Weywood*, a country house with deer on the lawn, and perhaps one or two rosy children who will look so nice, you know, when seated in the carriage side by side with a genuine King Charles."

But the age of pleasantry is gone. That of realists, naturalists, and egoists has succeeded ; and the glory of Romance is extinguished forever. The most that a serious generation can say in favor of these obsolete authors is that by their enthusiasm for our literature and by their portraits (however fancifully colored) of our countrymen, "they possess the merit" (as a learned professor once handsomely observed about his predecessor) "of having at any rate created an interest in the subject." Henceforward the French public became more curious about *ces insulaires*. "Milord," as seen on his travels and represented in the glowing pages of the story-tellers, became a model of fashionable deportment ; and thus arose that sincere form of flattery which has become so marked a feature of Parisian language and habits to-day.

It was, we fancy (speaking subject to correction), somewhere in the forties that the word *excentrique* first came into the French vocabulary, an epithet which has since then done the most comprehensive duty as applied to English personages in French fiction. Eccentricity, however, must not be understood in a wholly uncomplimentary sense ; on the contrary, it implied characteristics worthy of more serious investigation than they had yet received. Hence those treatises on England undertaken by scholars like M. Taine or by journalists like M. Hector Malot ; hence those international exhibitions designed to clear away prejudice and

misunderstanding; hence the whole array of "studies" and "revelations," instructive, humorous, or spiteful. We do not, as we said at the first, include this species of literature under fiction, though there is at times an obvious temptation to do so; but we refer to it solely because it serves as a link between the Englishman of the pre-scientific age and him of to-day; *her* we should perhaps add, for it is not the least glory of modern France to have discovered and admired (with some reservations) *la jeune demoiselle Anglaise*. It is true that so long as half a century ago the author of "Colomba" depicted in Lydia Nevil as lovable a specimen of English girlhood as may anywhere be found; but Prosper Mérimée dwelt by himself apart in many ways, and not least in his exceptional acquaintance with English life. For in those days, as we know, it was commonly believed that all young ladies of this country wore spectacles and had either red or straw-colored hair descending in long ringlets to the waist. That is quite different now; and the beauty of Albion's daughters, their health, their activity, their independence, have become an axiom with all reasonable foreigners.

We accept this tribute with the greater satisfaction because now more than ever the French novelist is in a position to speak with authority. Not only has more constant intercourse between the two nations given him opportunities of observation which his predecessors did not enjoy; but also he is himself (under whatever variety he be classed) a proclaimed patron of the truth and nothing but the truth. It follows that our compatriots, when they appear in the modern French novel, must not be considered a creation of the unchastened fancy, but a faithful and exact reflection of ourselves as others see us. We turn therefore with the most lively interest to the masters of present fiction.

It is a pleasure at the outset to observe that, despite the ravages of democracy, the British nobleman still persists. Twice in his career, if we mistake not, the hero of Tarascon was brought into

contact with members of our aristocracy. On the first occasion the scene was the Rigi Kulm hotel where, among the miscellaneous company whose glumness the president of the C.A. so successfully dissipated, was a middle-aged *Anglais* of correct and supercilious mien, accompanied by a very charming young lady. The visitors' book indicated "Lord Chipendale, member of the Jockey Club, and his niece," an entry which the sceptical Tartarin qualified by a mental *hum! hum!* We will not pursue the question of relationship, for we get but a passing glance of "le Lord Chipendale avec sa nièce — *hum! hum!*" but we must pause to congratulate M. Daudet on a happiness of nomenclature rare among his brother novelists. "Chipendale" is unquestionably good, combining as it does a suggestion of blue blood and elegance with a certain flavor of horsiness which amateurs of the turf will not fail to recognize. Of Lord William Plantagenet, commander of the Tomahawk, that ship on which the ill-fated founder of Port Tarascon was brought back to Europe and durance vile, what can be said except that it is a very noble name? Yet we like not the Plantagenet; for he was a cold, unappreciative man, whom indifference alone prevented from stigmatizing Tartarin as Mr. Pickwick on a famous occasion stigmatized Mr. Winkle. Her ladyship it is true (who was also on board the Tomahawk) was more sympathetic as she reclined in her hammock on deck and listened to the tale poured into her ear by this other Napoleon on board this second Northumberland. From Chipendale and Plantagenet it is a long descent to Mr. J. Tom Levis, who was not indeed an Englishman but passed himself off for one on the score of his ability as universal provider and manager in especial to the requirements of exiled royalty. Then there was that affable scoundrel Dr. Jenkins *l'Irlandais*, founder of the Bethlehem Hospital and dispenser of arsenical globules, the gentleman who plays so important a part in the story of the Nabob. How far Jenkins was modelled from the life (*arraché des*

entrailles mêmes de la vie, as the author has vigorously phrased it) we know not; but on the face of the matter it is obvious to remark that the vices of this heartless schemer are just those which appear to be most conspicuously absent from the Irish character. So far M. Alphonse Daudet, and no apology is needed for putting in the first place an author with so large a following in this country. Of English woman-kind we can recall no more prominent example from his works than the rather dim figure of Mademoiselle, the governess who has charge of Rose and Ninette, and who (being as we are told a *salutiste enragée*) regards their father, the dramatist, as a direct agent of evil. Certainly the idea of a "red-hot Salvationist" governess is not without novelty, and shows that M. Daudet is abreast of the times; but this Mademoiselle is really a very disagreeable person, and we should have preferred something more flattering from the creator of Désirée Delobelle, of Hortense, of Felicia Ruys, and Queen Frederica.

For further illustrations we must seek elsewhere. Take, for instance, the uncompromising M. Zola, who does not as a rule favor us with much attention. What a pretty picture that is of the two fair young English girls in the snowstorm that blocked the express from Havre! When the train had come to its final standstill, amid the tears of the women and the angry tones of the men, these sisters alone preserved their gaiety. To them the accident was a capital joke; they were *très amusées*. When the guard came round to reassure the frightened travellers, the younger of the two, putting her head out of the window, and speaking in good French but with a slight *zézaiement Britannique*, inquired playfully, "Alors, monsieur, c'est ici qu'on s'arrête?" And then, while the passengers ploughed their way to take refuge in the signalman's cottage, how merrily those young ladies laughed at the fun of extricating mamma from the snow into which that stout lady kept sinking down! Thank you, M. Zola, for those two bright, natural faces amid the som-

bre gallery of "La Bête Humaine;" we recognize them for our sisters, and we wish we had been there to help them through the snow.

An even more enterprising damsel is Miss Isabella Griffitt as described by an author separate by a whole hemisphere from M. Zola. Since the beautiful Isabella resides in Paris on her own account and supports herself by teaching English, we are not surprised that one of her pupils, Jacques Ferrier, should fall in love with her, and should propose a little trip together in Spain; but we confess to some amazement that Isabella (who is the daughter of an English clergyman) should be so remarkably free from the usual British prudery, not to say propriety, as readily to consent to this plan. The young gentleman then proceeds to Lormières to raise the necessary funds from a wealthy aunt whose heir he is. But here a rival to our Isabella appears in the person of Mademoiselle Isabelle d'Alpujaras, a maiden of purest Castilian blood, a fair and delicate creature just fresh from her convent school. The affections of the hero are now divided between the present Isabelle, and the absent Isabella whose portrait he carries about in his portmanteau. He feels that he could be happy with either. Each has her points; yet the contrast between the two is very marked, especially at luncheon-time, when Jacques observes that Isabelle merely plays with her food, while he remembers that the comely Isabella has a healthy appetite of her own, *taillant son ros-bif à grosses tranches et l'avalant d'un tour de gosier*. With this reflection comes the beginning of wisdom, and Jacques resolves to give up Isabella and the Spanish expedition. From the difficulty of announcing this breach of promise he is spared by the arrival of a telegram from Miss Isabella herself, in which that independent young lady informs him that she is tired of waiting for him and has gone off with somebody else. Such, then, is Miss Isabella Griffitt who figures in the pages of M. Ferdinand Fabre's whimsical story "Le Roi Ramire;" and we trust, for

his own peace of mind, that her father, *le révérend Grifflitt*, remained in happy ignorance of the proceedings of this *jeune personne charmante, mais fort excentrique*.

Charming and eccentric our countrywomen generally are, but very seldom downrightly objectionable or vicious. One specimen, however, of this sort may be adduced from a novel of M. Georges Ohnet, in which the presiding spirit is a certain Diana, Lady Olifaunt. Originally a barmaid in London, now the wife of a baronet and the mistress of a wealthy senator, this malignant Circe has, beyond her name and the face which has proved her fortune, no distinctive nationality about her. She is a typical adventuress of a commonplace sort, with a doubtful past and a precarious future, whose leading principle (in fact the only principle she can boast) is that for beauty unadorned with virtue there is no place in the world to live in like Paris.

But lest his public should suppose that all Englishwomen are young and fair to see, the French novelist has not omitted to fashion other characters of sterner aspect. There is, first of all, the British matron, invariably an object of respect, and even awe, when she travels abroad. This is a type which has not perhaps changed much since the appearance, now long years ago, of Edmond About's witty extravaganza, "*Le Roi des Montagnes*," a work which in our early days was (as no doubt it still is) an essential part in the polite education of every schoolboy. We remember the redoubtable Hadgi-Stavros; we remember the cool American John Harris, and his nephew Bill Lobster (a name obviously formed by false analogy from Crabbe); we remember the Maltese giant endowed with the muscles of a Hercules, whom an ironical fate condemned to earn his bread by the gentle art of sealing letters. But for none of these did we care; nor yet for the lovely Mary Ann, albeit she had (as Herr Hermann Schultz declared) "a silvery voice and burning eyes which would have ripened the peaches on your wall." No, it was

Madame Simons herself, "of the house of Barley and Co., bankers, 31 Cavendish Square," who seemed to us the real heroine of the book, a Cornelia who might have been the mother of the Gracchi, and who was in fact the mother of Mary Ann. The good lady could no longer indeed boast of outward charms, for she was now elderly and her features (we are told) "were as sharp as the blade of a Sheffield knife, while she had two rows of teeth which could only be described as pallsades." But adversity (as Bacon has it) "doth best discover virtue;" and Madame Simons during her involuntary sojourn in the camp of the brigands set an example to all ladies who may ever find themselves in a similar case. *Je suis Anglaise*, like the *civis Romanus sum* of old, was the proud preface of all her words; and in the regularity with which she demanded her meals, in her rooted objection to the payment of any ransom whatsoever, in her indignation that "two English ladies, citizens of the greatest empire in the world, should be reduced to drinking water like the common fish, and eating their meat without mustard and pickles," Madame Simons comported herself with a dignity and strength of mind worthy of her race. Indeed were it otherwise we should be without excuse for reviving the memory of a work so ancient and an author who must have been dead now some six or seven years. We return to the living.

It cannot be said that they are enthusiastic about mamma, but they have accepted her as an inevitable accompaniment of miss. There is, however, one variety of the English woman which the French novelist holds in utter abhorrence, and against which he is never weary of protesting. We refer of course to the unmarried lady of a certain age, who is occasionally (we presume) to be met with in France, but who in her most aggressive form is believed by our neighbors to be a peculiar growth of British soil. Listen, for example, to poor M. Guy de Maupassant, who delivers quite a philippic on the subject. After describing in his

own merciless fashion (*très grande, très maigre, figure de momie*, etc., etc.) an elderly spinster who was staying at a small village in Normandy, he proceeds to characterize her thus: "At table she sat severely apart rejecting all overtures of conversation, and occupying herself in reading Protestant tracts which she was in the habit of distributing among the villagers, greatly to the annoyance of the *curé*. . . . She was one of those stern and bigoted Puritans such as England produces so many of, one of those worthy and intolerable old maids who infest all the *tables d'hôte* of Europe, spoil Italy, poison Switzerland, and render the charming towns of the Mediterranean uninhabitable, bringing everywhere their peculiar manias, their indescribable toilettes, and a general demeanor which is that of petrified vestals."

This ferocious exordium, this tremendous indictment is introductory to the tale of poor "Miss Harriet," the lady whose sad fate furnished a fascinating painter (a Frenchman of course) with a pretty story which he related to his friends as *le plus lamentable amour de ma vie*. The tale has been quoted by admirers of M. de Maupassant as illustrating his power of pathos; for ourselves, having read it in an unprepared way, we were left with a quite different and very decided impression, which happily the nature of the present subject does not require us to make public. That question apart, it may be admitted that English maiden ladies are more given to travelling in foreign parts, and more pronounced perhaps when they do travel than those of other nations. Nay, have they not even roused the milder pessimism of Pierre Loti into language less sorrowful and more strenuous than is his wont? There were (he tells us in "*Japoneries d'Automne*") only four visitors besides himself at the Hotel Yaami; they were English tourists, "two elderly gentlemen of irreproachable appearance, and two misses of a ripe age. These ladies were six feet high, extremely plain [if we may so far euphemize *d'une extrême laideur*]; and the costume of each was

a kind of birdcage in white muslin, thrusting out projections of whalebone all round the figure. To my eyes they appeared like a couple of large apes dressed up to perform at a fair." Worse was yet to come; for when, having survived the dinner, the sensitive Loti had retired to a verandah overlooking the garden, there to smoke and meditate in peace, "Horror! the two misses, having escaped from their room, came and proceeded to frolic about in the garden paths with the friskiness of babies and the grace of orang-outangs!" Alas, poor ladies! Coming from a *connoisseur* of such world-wide experience, this judgment admits, we fear, of no appeal. Alas, poor Loti! *corruptio optimi pessima*. Sad indeed it is to think of the base obligations which *la vérité* imposes upon authors belonging to the politest nation in the world.

And this mention of nationality reminds us that the original Loti (the Loti of "*Aziyadé*" and "*Rarahu*") was a British naval officer, concerning whom a few biographical details relevant to the curious inquirer. Thus we know that he was at the first plain Harry Grant, whom the Maoris baptized "Loti" when H.M.S. Rendeer was stationed in the South Pacific. Transferred from the Rendeer to the Prince of Wales, and from Tahiti to Salonica, Lieutenant Grant, amid the delights of that little establishment at Eyoub, still yearned at times for Brightbury, his native place, and the Yorkshire woods where once his careless childhood strayed. Now all this is as it should be. Yet we have sometimes mildly wondered why M. Julien Viaud should have made his eponymous hero an Englishman, and whether our navy does indeed nurture many unsuspected "*Lotis*." For consider the complex character of this young man and the catholicity of his tastes; that journal in which he revealed his inmost self; those letters, full of the infinite vanity and sadness of all things, which he wrote to his sister at Brightbury or to friend Plunkett in London. Consider again the intellectual interests of these two friends, how familiarly they correspond with

one another on scepticism and materialism in the France of the eighteenth century, how felicitous and almost epigrammatic is that description of the leaders of the Romantic movement as "a generation attacked by moral phthisis, regretting the past which it did not know, cursing the present which it did not understand, and doubting the future which it did not foresee." Consider all this, and you will either perceive at once that Lieutenant Harry Grant of Le Prince of Walles and his particular friend Mr. Plunkett were no ordinary naval officers, but were indeed (like the philosopher of Plato) "spectators of all time and all existence;" or else you will reflect with profound satisfaction upon the immense advance of culture in the British navy since the days of our old friends Peter Simple and Frank Mildmay.

But the mythical Loti (if we may so far distinguish him from his author and creator) is long since dead; his epitaph was written by the poetical Plunkett, resorting for that purpose to Hugo and De Musset; no more phantoms of the East or elsewhere will, we hope, disturb his repose. And otherwise Pierre Loti refers but seldom to our sailors of whom professionally he must have seen a good deal. The British tar impressed him as "grave and correct," which no doubt he is—at times. Again, the effect of the "Marseillaise," as rendered by English seamen "with the same slow, funereal movement as in their own God Save," appears to have been most depressing. On the whole, we fear that this fashionable author does not much like our people. They are too ubiquitous; wherever you go, they are installed in advance for business or for pleasure, and in either case thoroughly at home. At Singapore for example (*Propos d'Exil*), "There are many Englishmen, drinkers of pale ale, and misses taking the air on a stretch of green turf." At Tangier again (*Au Maroc*), the same phenomenon occurs and calls forth a plaintive *hélas!* Even when you have penetrated to the sacred city of Fez you cannot escape them, for there an *ex-colonel Anglais* is found

presiding over the native force which he has drilled and instructed. And then, when you are returning from the interior of Morocco, full of your dream of the "sombre . . . impenetrable . . . past," picturesquely clad in burnous and with bare legs, what can jar more rudely on your sensations, or what recall you more abruptly to civilization and commonplace, than to fall suddenly into a swarm of young English misses engaged in playing lawn tennis? On all these accounts, being men of sentiment ourselves, we tender to the sentimental voyager our respectful sympathy. Nor is it to be much wondered at, if, besides the artistic antipathy we can discern here and there, as in the fine passage on Admiral Courbet's death, a subdued note of hostility towards the nation which, as a naval and colonial power, has France for its only possible rival.

And now that, with the consideration of Pierre Loti, the most actual moment of contemporary fiction has been reached, it would perhaps be in accord with custom to set about a classification of our characters with a view to proceeding thence to conclusions. But for a method so scientific, and possibly so invidious, as this we have little inclination, preferring to consider these pages as supplying merely a few stray materials towards a subject worthy of more serious treatment. We refrain, therefore, from approaching a theme so tempting as the principles (phonetic or other) on which the French novelist constructs an English surname; we refrain also from the delicate question of spelling, than which nothing more clearly illustrates the original antagonism between Romance and Teutonic languages; while, in regard to the old difficulty of English titles, it is only fair to congratulate our neighbors on a degree of proficiency which has made "Sir Edwards" and his like, if not quite extinct, almost as rare now as the immortal "Williams" himself.

But these, it may be said, are trifles, and lie only on the surface; moreover, the French novelist might retaliate on some points, supposing him ever to

read English fiction. It is more important to observe that increased communication between the two nations tends apparently to restrict rather than extend the use of English characters in French novels. Not indeed that they occur infrequently, but that they play as a rule such very modest parts, lurking, so to speak, in odd corners of the book, and only to be tracked out by the keen scent of insular pride. No longer are we favored with wholesale excursions into our political and social life; even M. Jules Verne, the creator of Phileas Fogg and so many other countrymen of ours, seems now to belong to a past era. It may simply be that familiarity has taken away the charm of novelty; or it may be that the French novelist of credit and renown, conscious that his works are nowadays read on this side of the Channel almost as much as on his own, fears to tread where his predecessors rushed boldly in. It would seem indeed that the fancy for employing English persons and localities varies inversely with the knowledge of the author. M. Paul Bourget, for example, is probably as well acquainted with our country as any other of his literary brethren; and yet, if we remember right, he has confined himself to some safe generalities about the unpleasantness of London fogs and the beauties of the Isle of Wight. On the other hand the casual *feuilletoniste*, free and irresponsible, thinks nothing of plunging his readers into a Strand encumbered at midday with long rows of wagons, and pervaded by urchins who scream out *meutches! meutches!*

And yet while appreciating the advantages of comparative accuracy, and the restraints thereby imposed, we cannot admit that the fictional uses of our race have been exhausted. Many varieties of English life has the French novelist touched and adorned; but he has never yet, so far as we know, brought himself of introducing into his pages an authentic specimen of that worthy and typical public which, thanks to the so-called "vulgarization of travel," has become now so frequent a visitor to his shores. Doubtless it

will come soon; for everything to-day begins with the journals, and the wits of the Parisian press have for some time been exercised over those strange British tourists who arrive in their companies, marshalled by their guide, to see the sights of the gay capital as quickly and economically as may be. How are they to be treated? Already more than one note of warning has been sounded, the latest by that talented novelist and playwright, M. Ludovic Halévy. The subject lends itself naturally to the vein of *raillerie bienveillante* for which the author of "Criquette" is remarkable. M. Halévy sits (if we may say so without disrespect to his Academic position) in the seat of the scornful; yet his words are not to be disregarded. He has himself seen these people; he has himself been their victim; and the year 1892 will be memorable in literary history, if only for those *deux cyclones* which raged, the one at Versailles, the other at the Louvre. Cyclones indeed! Language fails the author to describe the overwhelming advance of the personally conducted. It is an "avalanche," a "water-spout," a "whirlwind," a "thunderbolt," this horde of English men and women that comes sweeping through the galleries of the Louvre, to the great fear and bodily danger of all loiterers and students. But M. Halévy, though finding himself in the very centre of the disturbance, preserved enough presence of mind to note and report its characteristics. He was struck of course (as the Frenchman invariably professes to be) with the amplitude of the female foot, as inferred from "those boats, sledges, anything you like rather than ladies' boots" which were obtruded upon his view; he was struck by the order and discipline of the whole caravan, knowing that they must do the Louvre thoroughly and that in forty-five minutes, and therefore rendering implicit obedience to the short, sharp, imperious *Oh! Oh!* of the showman; he was struck by the patriotism which tempted them to linger, to the despair of their guide, over Vandyck's Charles I.; he was struck

especially by the business-like behavior of a gentleman who, being told that Géricault's great picture had been bought for only six thousand francs, at once proceeded to measure its breadth with his umbrella, and turning to his wife observed gravely and confidentially, "Rather more than nine!"

The sketch is too recent to bear further quotation. Yet, slight though it be, we submit that here is a new field for exploration, here are infinite possibilities, the development of which we shall await with interest in future French fiction.

ARTHUR F. DAVIDSON.

From Chambers' Journal.
THE LAST OF THE PEPLAWS.

BY G. B. BURGIN.

MISS MARIA PEPLAW stood on the stone doorstep in order mournfully to watch the carpenter's assistant unscrew the brass plate which had braved the storms of some five-and-twenty winters, and replace it by a new one bearing a slightly modified legend. Peplow House was still what the humorous local gravedigger, when under the influence of beer, was facetiously accustomed to describe as "a cemetery for young ladies;" but beneath that ghoulish statement the words "The Misses Peplow" no longer appeared. Miss Jane Peplow, the elder sister, had basely deserted the flowery paths of scholastic tuition, and would shortly be known as Mrs. Barton, the spouse of a benevolent provision-merchant in the town. Miss Maria grieved that the ancient family of Peplow should be disgraced by what, in her prim, old-fashioned "French of Stratteforde at Bowe," she was wont to term a "miss-alliance." Miss Jane had indeed made a false step, and, what was worse, had not even evinced a proper shame in doing it.

When the new door-plate was screwed on—every twist of the screws hurt Miss Maria—she entered the passage, went up to Jane's bedroom, and sternly opened the door. Jane, a fair-haired,

handsome woman of forty-eight—Miss Maria was dark, three years younger, and more aristocratic in appearance, with a not altogether unpleasing suggestion of lavender-like primness—had just emerged from the hands of her bridesmaid, and was radiant in black silk and orange blossoms. "Enter, Maria," she said pleasantly. "I trust you have reconsidered your decision, and will honor my nuptials with your presence." But she quailed visibly.

Miss Maria sat down. She spoke with an effort. "If dear papa were alive," she said frostily, "as an officer and a gentleman he could not have approved of such a match—such an incongruous mingling with the plebeian throng; it would have broken his heart. We have never before descended to—to combine with butter. Correct me if I err in this statement, Jane."

Jane dared not. She had often heard the same remark before, but affected to treat it as wholly novel.

"You must be aware that by such a marriage you forfeit all claim to social recognition. Already, the baneful effect of such a descent has made itself felt. Two of the parlor boarders are about to leave. The—the ostensible pretext was Australian tinned meat supplied by Mr. Barton. In reality, it was the fact of your entering into a matrimonial alliance with butter, perhaps oleomargarine. Under the circumstances, you cannot expect me to—to extend the hand of cordiality to that—that doubtless worthy person. The Peplows were always wholesale, for the few brief years they dabbled in commerce."

"You are very proud, Maria," said Jane sadly. "Sometimes I think that there are finer things to do in this world than to devote one's life to the exaction of deference based upon mere family considerations."

Miss Maria declined to discuss the question. "Has the hymeneal chariot arrived?" she asked.

Miss Jane hastened to a window and peered out. The old flyman from the Red Lion over the way had just affixed a white ribbon to his whip, and

was rheumatically climbing up on the box. Then he flicked his Roman-nosed roan as it lumbered over to Peplow House. The flyman had put on his best coat for the ceremony, and hidden his crooked, unliveried legs in a chastely striped rug, as a tacit concession to the sentiment proper to such an abnormally solemn occasion.

"The—the chariot waits, sister," she said. Miss Maria would have fainted had Miss Jane called the ancient vehicle a fly.

"Very well," said Miss Maria. "Do not think I reproach you, Jane. Better the intellectual refinement of a solitary crust and celibacy than the parvenu plenty of tinned tongue and a husband beneath one in the social scale. I am still left to watch over the family honor."

Miss Jane hesitated nervously. "Some day you may be glad of a husband's sheltering love," she said gently. "The struggle has been a hard one, Maria. John——"

"I am not socially conscious of the existence of any individual of that name," said Miss Maria, primly tying her bonnet strings. "Officially I am compelled to recognize Mr. Barton's existence as your husband; but as 'John'—never!"

"Mr. Barton," blushed Jane. "Mr. Barton wishes to know if you will honor him by living with us and giving up the sch—the academy?"

Miss Maria was touched, but called up the family pride to maintain her faltering resolution. "Jane," she said, in the tones of a female Casabianca—"Jane, do not add to your other indiscretions by seeking to lure me from the path of duty. I do not blame you, Jane. Your confiding nature was no match for the wiles of one versed in the sophistries of the retail provision trade, the questionable morality which covers with an eleemosynary candlestick the doubtful quality of his dubious foreign wines; your innocence of plebeian usages is the best excuse for what you are about to do; but, Jane, much as it pains me to tell you so, Mrs. Barton cannot be received within the walls

of this academy. You—you understand?"

"I understand," faltered Jane. "Of course, Maria, with your stern sense of family duty, it could not be otherwise."

"No," said Miss Maria, with Spartan fortitude; "it could not be otherwise, Jane." But she crossed over to Jane and kissed her.

"But the—the bills?" timidly suggested Jane.

"When your name was removed from the prospectus and the door-plate of this academy," said Miss Maria, "you, naturally, ceased to have any connection with the business details of such an establishment. The chariot waits. I believe it is customary for the bride to lead the way. As my elder sister, you are doubly entitled to precedence."

"Oh, sister, I'm so nervous," faltered Miss Jane, with tears in her china-blue eyes. "I ought to be so happy, and yet I'm thoroughly miserable."

Miss Maria shook her iron-grey locks with grim determination, and led the way; but Jane drew back. "This—this is the first quarrel we have ever had, sister," she faltered. "Sister, dear sister, bless me before I go to my new home;" and she flung her arms round Miss Maria's neck and burst into tears.

Miss Maria lost her stony composure for a moment, and blessed the somewhat mature bride. "I—er—hope you may be happy, Jane. I shall miss you, although you never could maintain discipline in the dormitories. Now, let us descend. The populace await us."

The vicar was waiting to receive the party at the church, but even at such an eventful moment his first thoughts were for Miss Maria. Miss Maria motioned him aside with, "I commit Miss Peplow to your care, Mr. Kesterton;" and Mr. Kesterton received Miss Jane and led her up to the altar, Miss Maria following behind, and turning off at her own pew, sternly unconscious of the fourteen pupils, who giggled and wept alternately, or dropped surreptitious bags of rice all over the seats.

Mr. Barton, a middle-aged, gentlemanly man, hastened to meet the bride. He was supported by a tall, grave individual named Farmer Stebbins, a mighty producer of mangolds and manures. Miss Maria had played with him in the fields, and sung with him in the choir until she learned from her father that Stebbins was beneath her socially. How could she possibly be on terms of intimacy with a man who supplied milk for her young ladies! Miss Maria recognized him frigidly, and bowed her head in uncompromising prayer. Ordinarily, she patronized Farmer Stebbins with a stately dignity, occasionally so far unbending as to drive out to the farm and pay his accounts. On those occasions, Farmer Stebbins had exhibited a quiet pleasure that so majestic a little lady should honor his poor house by her presence. But he had never before met Miss Maria on terms of social, though temporary, equality like the present.

After the completion of the ceremony, Miss Maria went into the vestry, signed certain documents, and drove home alone under the vigilant protection of her red-nosed charioteer. Nothing but a stern sense of duty enabled her to bear up against Jane's departure. That night, for the first time in her life, she was unable to sleep. Jane had shared the same couch with her for thirty years, and Miss Maria had always slept with one hand thrown protectingly over Jane's head. Presently, she bethought her of a soft hairbrush, with the bristles upward, and placed it on Jane's pillow, but carefully removed it every morning lest Dorcas the housemaid should discover her weakness.

And Jane and her husband waxed happier every day, although the school grew smaller and smaller, until even the romantic yet elderly assistant-governess was dismissed and Miss Maria reigned alone—reigned alone, with a haggard, careworn look which nearly moved Jane to tears as she sat opposite her sister in church every Sunday. And then one day the crash came. Perkins the butcher obtained judgment

by default, put a greasy-looking sheriff's officer "in possession;" and Miss Maria gave up the struggle as she sat, with folded hands and slightly twitching lips, watching her household gods—her dearest relics—being labelled and ticketed and catalogued, and announced for public sale "without reserve."

Miss Maria sternly refused all assistance from "Trade," and sat waiting among the ruins of her home. A few small worldly possessions still remained to her, but they were of little value. On the last afternoon which remained to the last of the Peplows in her old home, she wandered about the desolate house, and took a final farewell of all the precious possessions which were henceforth to be scattered among the inhabitants of High Drayton. Then she came back to her own sitting-room, and was rather startled when some one knocked at the door, and the vicar entered.

Miss Maria with a stately courtesy motioned to him to be seated.

The vicar seated himself on a cane-bottomed chair as if it had been a throne, and proceeded to acquit himself of a somewhat delicate mission. "You will pardon me for intruding upon you at such a time, Miss Peplow," he said deferentially; "but the fact is I have come to ask you a favor."

Miss Maria smiled. It was the one ray of sunshine in the crash which had shattered her fortunes. She bowed to the vicar, and motioned to him to proceed.

"The truth is," said the vicar, "we are in a difficulty, Miss Maria. The matron in charge of Hollibone's Trust has somewhat suddenly gone away, and there is no one to fill her place. It has been pointed out to me that you are accustomed to command, and I have lost not a moment, as I was unaware of your plans, in hastening to place the post at your disposal."

Miss Maria almost wept, but she was not going to sacrifice the family pride so easily. "Of course you must consider my position," she said graciously.

"As a Peplow, I should lose caste by accepting such a post."

"I have thought of that," said the vicar; "but perhaps you will recall the fact that the matron before the last was Lady Castlemaine's niece."

"A precedent of that sort enables me to accept the post you are good enough to bring to my notice," said Miss Maria amiably, and feeling that she must break down if the vicar stayed much longer. Here was a way out of her difficulties without relying on the loathsome succor of Trade. She was not aware that Trade in the person of Mr. Barton had bought out the matron and hastily disposed of her in order that Miss Maria might be spared the pain of becoming homeless. But then Trade is seldom credited with refinement of this kind, and so Miss Maria never knew who it was that had stepped in to shelter her; which was just as well, or she would have gone out into the rain and have refused to be sheltered.

Trade had pointed out to the vicar that the post was vacant, whereupon that worthy gentleman had at once suggested Miss Maria, if she could be persuaded to stoop to such an appointment. Then Trade had used plain language. "It's all her wicked pride," Mr. Barton said. "She's breaking Jane's heart, vicar. I think a little misfortune would do her good; but she's lived a blameless, honorable, hard-working life, and I don't see how she's to strike root elsewhere. If you'll coax her into it, Jane will come and thank you; but we daren't be seen with you, or she'd suspect something."

The late lamented Hollibone had erected six beautiful little Queen Anne, red-brick cottages and an arched dwelling in the centre with a spire on the top. The central dwelling was allotted to the lady matron, the six cottages to divers elderly widows and spinsters of the town whom misfortune had overtaken. In return for a small weekly dole, they were expected to attend church twice on Sundays and once on saints' days, to pray for Hollibone as well as their own souls. When they had performed this duty, they were al-

lowed to do as they pleased, but were required to be back in their cottages by eight o'clock every night. The lady matron of course could stay out as long as she liked.

That particularly handy man Farmer Stebbins happened to be passing at the time in a very roomy vehicle, and was pleased to place it at Miss Maria's disposal. Whilst Miss Maria's scanty goods and chattels were being removed to the lady matron's lodge, the vicar took her back to see his wife, and kept her there until it was dark.

Miss Maria, as the vicar handed her into a cosy brougham, and told his coachman to drive to the lodge, felt that she wanted to cry. She had upheld the family honor under exceptionally trying circumstances. Providence had come to her assistance, or she would have had nowhere to lay her head. She drew the black fur carriage rug round her and shivered, for the autumn night was chill.

When the carriage stopped, Miss Maria got out. "This way, if you please, ma'am," said a well-known voice.

"Dorcas!" cried Miss Maria in surprised tones. "You here?"

"Yes, if you please, ma'am," said Dorcas. "You didn't think I was going to leave you all by yourself, now Miss Jane has gone."

"But, Dorcas," said Miss Maria gently, as she sank into a chair before the fire, and Dorcas brought out her fur slippers as usual, "you must be aware that I have met with pecuniary reverses, and am unable to keep a servant."

Miss Maria had once nursed Dorcas through an illness, and Dorcas—a very pretty, affectionate girl—was ill-bred enough to remember the fact. "I'm going to be married in a few months, ma'am, to Farmer Stebbins's head man," she said; "and the vicar has offered me the lodge-keeper's post here."

"But where's the lodge?" demanded Miss Maria.

"Here, ma'am," replied Dorcas. "My duty is to look after my mistress. But it's time you had your negus."

She came back in a few minutes with the negus and a slice of toast cut into strips. Miss Maria, her gown turned back, as was her custom, sat, with her feet on the fender, thoughtfully warming both hands at the cheerful fire. At half past eight, Dorcas brought in Miss Maria's Bible, and respectfully sat down near the door.

Miss Maria looked round with somewhat blurred eyes. "Let us thank God for all his mercies," she said. "And Dorcas —"

"Yes, ma'am," quietly returned Dorcas.

"Don't sit over there in the cold, but draw your chair up to the fire."

Dorcas had made her bed in the little dressing-room next to Miss Maria's chamber. She tucked up Miss Maria very tenderly, and then went back to her own room. Miss Maria was so tired that she fell asleep without thinking of the hairbrush. Then Dorcas stole quietly down-stairs and admitted those shivering, half-frozen conspirators, Mr. and Mrs. Barton.

"How does she take it?" sobbed Jane.

"Like a lamb, ma'am," replied Dorcas. "Would you care to have just a peep at her?"

"She would think it a great liberty," said Jane; but she followed Dorcas softly up-stairs, and knelt by Miss Maria's bed.

Miss Maria's hand wandering unconsciously about in search of the hairbrush, touched Jane's soft hair. She gave a little cry and awoke.

"Jane! Jane!" she cried. "Dear, dear Jane, where are you?"

"Did you call, miss?" asked Dorcas, quietly presenting herself with a light after Jane had crept away.

Miss Maria sat up in bed wildly. "Yes, I—I—I must have been dreaming, Dorcas. I thought Jane was here, and that she cried over me."

"It's the strange room, ma'am," replied Dorcas, tucking her up again; and again Miss Maria slept.

As the days went by, every one of any importance made a point of calling

on Miss Maria. People respected her gallant struggle against overwhelming odds; they wanted to show their respect; and so they called at all hours, from old Lady Castlemaine down to Farmer Stebbins, who had sung in the choir with Miss Maria when they were children. In those days, Miss Maria had patronized Stebbins with a gracious condescension which somewhat overwhelmed him, never forgetting to let him feel that they were separated by an immeasurable gulf. And Stebbins had sighed, and gone about the accumulation of filthy lucre in the shape of manure as the one object of his life. Many a maid had longed for him and sighed in vain; many a matron had lured him into afternoon tea on Sundays, and thrown out mysterious hints that so warm a man ought to marry and settle down. Farmer Stebbins had never married. And now that his idol had seemed to fall from her high estate, he developed a more chivalrous courtesy than before. It is needless to say that he had not worried Miss Maria with bills. Every morning he came personally with a tin can of his best cream for her use; every week he brought eggs and butter to Dorcas; and when Miss Maria gently checked him one morning, he replied that he was sorry to displease her, but that he must obey orders. Miss Maria, thinking that he alluded to the trustees, made no more objections, but, from bowing with gracious condescension, actually invited him into the parlor once a month for five minutes' conversation.

Stebbins was true to her; he had always recognized her social position; and the disparity in their family was so great that Miss Maria felt she could safely meet him on the neutral ground of their childish experience without losing caste. Jane never had cared for caste, and was happy; Miss Maria had cared for caste all her life, and was unhappy. She fell into the habit of inquiring about Jane from Stebbins. Jane also asked about Miss Maria from the worthy farmer. Thus an indirect method of communication between the sisters was established. Miss Maria

also relied upon Stebbins to help in the onerous duties of her post. To her surprise, she found herself gradually glad to leave most of them in his hands. Her long struggle with the world had tired her mentally and physically. The ruddy-cheeked Stebbins, with his enormous muscular strength and gentle, clumsy ways, exercised a soothing effect upon her nerves. She even discovered from the County Guide that his family had once been the De Stevens, then Destevins, then plain Stebbins. He came of a more honorable and ancient stock than the Peplows themselves, although his father had never served her Most Gracious Majesty. Hence, when Stebbins, with many blushes, asked her to take tea at the farm in order to meet Mrs. Barton on neutral territory, Miss Maria, after a faint show of resistance, actually consented to do so. For some three or four months—it was now January—she had lived her solitary life, haunted by the fear that Dorcas would marry and leave her.

"You must not waste your life on me, Dorcas," she said, as she dressed in her best lavender silk for the tea-party. "I have been selfish in accepting your devotion. When do you intend to be married?"

"Not before you, ma'am," said Dorcas quietly, and went away.

Miss Maria started. Poor Dorcas! Then a faint flush dyed her cheek. "Dorcas, what did you mean by that remark?" she asked when Dorcas returned with her best cap.

"What I said, ma'am," answered Dorcas, carefully putting the cap in the box. "Shall I bring a lantern to light us on the way back?"

It was a clear, frosty afternoon. A robin twittered faint make-believe music on a bare branch outside the window. Miss Maria listened to the bird for a moment, and then drew on her gloves. When she went downstairs another surprise awaited her in the shape of the Red Lion chariot. "What do you want?" she inquired somewhat sharply of the red-nosed Jehu.

Jehu was a man of few words. "You, mum," he stolidly answered.

"What for?" inquired Miss Maria.

"Stebbinses," said Jehu woodenly.

"But, my good man, I didn't order you to come," said Miss Maria.

Jehu flicked an imaginary fly from the venerable ruin in the shafts, but made no answer.

"Go home," said Miss Maria. "I shall walk."

She went down the path, followed by Dorcas and the chariot. When she looked round, Jehu still followed at a snail's pace.

"Didn't you hear me?" asked Miss Maria. "Where are you going?"

"Stebbinses," said Jehu.

"I think we'd better get in, ma'am," suggested Dorcas. "He'll go there all the same."

Miss Maria got in, mentally deciding that she had yielded only to *force majeure*.

Jehu touched his hat when she got out of the chariot. "Nine o'clock, mum?" he asked.

"Yes," said Miss Maria, taken by surprise; and the chariot rumbled away, each wheel looking as if it wanted to go to a different point of the compass.

Stebbins was at the hall door to receive them. Miss Maria thought that he had never shown to so much advantage. All his natural timidity had vanished. He was the quiet, courteous host, full of homely cordiality and good feeling. His housekeeper took Miss Maria up-stairs to remove her bonnet. There was a cosy fire in the best bedroom. Suddenly, Miss Maria—the housekeeper had gone down—fell on her knees by the side of the bed and began to cry softly, utterly regardless of the fact that she was crushing her best cap beyond redemption. She moved from one familiar piece of furniture to another—furniture which she had thought never to see again. There it all was—the old familiar mahogany bedstead, the little bookcase by its side, the ancient bureau, the vast clothespress, the faded carpet, the painting of her father on the wall, the needlework

sampler which had bidden contemptuous defiance to all well-known laws of ornithology and botany for so many years; nay, even the paper was the same pattern, although fresher and newer. And the room had been partitioned off to exactly the same size as her old apartment at Peplow House. There was even an old-fashioned pin-cushion on the dressing-table — no one knew how sorely she missed that pin-cushion — just as it had stood for years at Peplow House.

Before she had recovered from her surprise, the housekeeper again knocked at the door. Miss Maria hastily busied herself with her cap. "Does any one use this room?" she asked.

"No, ma'am."

"Has any one ever used it?"

"No, ma'am."

Then she went down-stairs, and was not surprised to find herself back at the Peplow House drawing-room again.

Stebbins came forward to meet Miss Maria with quiet deference, and led her to a chair — her chair — by the fire.

She could not speak.

Stebbins gave her time to recover herself. "How can I thank you?" asked Miss Maria.

"If it gives you pleasure," he said, in his simple, honest way — "if it gives you pleasure, Miss Maria, it is the only excuse I have for doing it. I didn't like to think of your missing the things."

"But don't you see," she said, "you — you make it harder for me to go back?"

"Don't go back. I'll go away if you care to stay here."

"What, John!" His name slipped from her lips unconsciously. She had not called him John for more than five-and-twenty years. "Give up your home for me!"

"Yes," he said simply. "Why not?"

Miss Maria's feeble edifice of family pride tottered and crumbled away like a house of cards. "John," she said softly, "I have spent my whole life in pursuit of shadows. You shame me, John."

He led her back to her chair, whence she had risen under the influence of strong emotion. "I only want to see you happy," he said. "I could think of no other way than to preserve the things you love. They — they comforted me."

"Comforted you?"

"Yes."

"Have you — have you any sorrow?" hesitatingly inquired Miss Maria.

"Yes," said John; "ever since I can remember anything, it has been with me."

Then a light flashed upon Miss Maria. This man had loved her all his life. She had made a barrier between them which was insurmountable. He had watched over her, cherished her, loved her, only to be repaid by condescending impertinence and patronage. Even now, he was too noble to be revenged, too magnanimous to crush her as she deserved. His sole thought had been for her happiness, for her well-being.

For a moment they stood looking into each other's eyes. The woman's fell. She moved blindly towards the door. Most men would have taken advantage of her helplessness. This man would not speak even now. Suddenly, she came back and held out her hand.

"Will you forgive me?" she asked. "I have treated you very cruelly, very unworthily. I only see my own meanness through my tears. Had I found this out years ago, when I was younger and unbroken by the world, I — I should have acted differently."

Stebbins stood as one dazed; but she came nearer still, her thin, white hands clasped together. "I am so sorry," she said — "so very, very sorry. Oh, if our lives could come over again. Now, I am broken and old and worn, with no one to love me, no one to care, no one to remove the barriers which my hideous pride has raised around me. I have wasted my life — and yours! Forgive me!"

Stebbins raised her up. "You are the only woman in the world for me," he said. "I've loved you since we sat in the choir and our voices mingled

together. You made my heaven then. Will you make it again?"

She crept into the shelter of his strong arms. "You are so strong," she sobbed, and laid her head upon his breast.

From *Belgravia*.

FANNY KEMBLE.¹

FANNY KEMBLE was not a great actress, or a great writer, or a great beauty, but she had the gift, and that a distinct and by no means common one, of a personality original and fascinating. The circumstances of her birth and parentage were at once advantageous and the reverse. The fact of her Kemble name and blood was undoubtedly no small factor in the success of her career as actress, playwright, and reciter; while on the other hand, the same fact militated against her perhaps more than it benefited her, because the genius of other members of her family led the public to expect from one of her name more than she, at all events, was able to give. Just as the genius of John Kemble overshadowed the graceful talents of his brother Charles (Fanny Kemble's father), so was Fanny Kemble herself completely overshadowed by the greatness of her aunt, Mrs. Siddons.

Even nature had not been so kind to her. Of personal beauty, so important a desideratum in the career of an actress, she could scarcely claim a share. The majestic dignity of form and beauty of feature which distinguished Mrs. Siddons had not descended to her. A little woman, inclined to a stoutness too great for her height, her hopes of beauty were destroyed early in her girlhood by an attack of small-pox, which, as she herself records, "rendered my complexion thick and muddy and my features heavy and coarse, leaving me so moderate a share of good looks as quite to warrant my mother's satisfaction in saying when I went on the stage, 'Well, my dear, they can't say

we have brought you out to exhibit your beauty.' Plain I undoubtedly was, but I by no means always looked so; and so great was the variation in my appearance at different times, that my comical old friend, Mrs. Fitzhugh, once exclaimed, 'Fanny Kemble, you are the ugliest and the handsomest woman in London!'"

The justice of this somewhat paradoxical pronouncement was in great measure borne out by the fact, that in Fanny Kemble there was visible a certain grace of deportment and bearing, which, innate and hereditary as it was, she shared in some degree with the greater members of her family, while her countenance was both expressive and pleasing.

At the time when she was attacked by the small-pox, she was a girl of sixteen, just returned from school in Paris, and her description of herself in one respect at this period is worthy of notice, in that it somewhat sets at nought the well-established belief in the certain efficacy of a French dancing master.

"All my French dancing lessons had not given me a good deportment, nor taught me to hold myself upright. I stooped, slouched, and poked, stood with one hip up, and one shoulder down, and exhibited an altogether disgracefully ungraceful carriage, which greatly afflicted my parents. . . . I was placed under the tuition of a sergeant of the Royal Foot Guards, who undertook to make young ladies carry themselves and walk well, and not exactly like grenadiers either. This warrior having duly put me through a number of elementary exercises, such as we see the awkward squads on parade grounds daily drilled in, took leave of me with the verdict that I 'was fit to march before the Duke of York,' then commander of the forces; and, thanks to his instructions, I remained endowed with a flat back, well-placed shoulders, an erect head, upright carriage, and resolute steps."

The Kembles, that is Charles Kemble and his family, were at this time living in London, in a house in Soho Square; and it was just at this period of her life,

¹ Record of a Girlhood. By Frances Ann Kemble. London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1879.

Fanny Kemble tells us, that she first "began to be aware of the ominous distresses and disturbances connected with the affairs of the theatre" (Covent Garden) "that were to continue and increase until the miserable subject became literally the sauce of our daily bread, embittering my father's life with incessant care and harassing vexation, and of the haunting apprehension of that ruin which threatened us for years, and which his most strenuous efforts only delayed, without averting it. The proprietors were engaged in a lawsuit with each other, and finally one of them threw the whole concern into Chancery; and for years that dreary Chancery suit seemed to envelop us in an atmosphere of palpitating suspense or stagnant uncertainty, and to enter as an inevitable element into every hope, fear, expectation, resolution, event, or action of our lives."

The effect which the struggles and embarrassments of her father in connection with Covent Garden Theatre had upon Fanny Kemble's future career was very great. Even in those early years of her girlhood, the desire to help in some way the waning fortunes of her family is clearly apparent. And it was with this object that a few years later she embraced a profession which, notwithstanding strong hereditary taste and sympathy with histrionic art, was, in most respects, eminently distasteful to her.

At this time, however, her great ambition was to be distinguished as a writer. Thus in one of her letters written to a dear friend in the year 1827, the young girl, then between sixteen and seventeen, says: "To make a name for myself as a writer is the aim of my ambition." And in pursuance of this she was actually writing a play, of which in the same letter she speaks as follows:—

"As nobody but myself can give you any opinion of it" (the play) "you must be content to take my own, making all allowances for etc., etc., etc. I think, irrespective of age or sex, it is not a bad play—perhaps, considering both, a tolerably fair one; there is some

good writing in it, and good situations; the latter I owe to suggestions of my mother's, who is endowed with what seems to me really a science by itself, *i.e.*, the knowledge of producing dramatic effect; more important to a playwright than even true delineation of character or beautiful poetry."

Fanny Kemble here alludes to her mother's accurate perception of dramatic expediency. Mrs. Charles Kemble would seem, indeed, from her daughter's testimony to have been the possessor of qualities as distinctive in their own way as those of the family with which her marriage connected her. Speaking of her, Fanny Kemble declares:—

"I am persuaded that whatever qualities of mind or character I inherit from my father's family, I am more strongly stamped with those which I derive from my mother, a woman who, possessing no specific gift in such perfection as the dramatic talent of the Kembles, had in a higher degree than any of them the peculiar organization of genius. To the fine senses of a savage rather than a civilized nature, she joined an acute instinct of correct criticism in all matters of art, and a general quickness and accuracy of perception, and brilliant vividness of expression, that made her conversation delightful. Had she possessed half the advantages of education which she and my father labored to bestow upon us, she would, I think, have been one of the most remarkable persons of her time."

Mrs. Kemble was the daughter of a French officer in one of the armies which France sent to invade Switzerland. His name was Decamp, and his daughter, who was born in Vienna on the anniversary of the "Empress-King's" birth, he called Maria Theresa. Afterwards, when Captain Decamp had settled in London, his little daughter became the most distinguished of the little band of child-actors and actresses, who under the direction of Le Texier, the celebrated French reader, performed Berquin's and Madame de Genlis's juvenile dramas.

But to return to Fanny Kemble. A

little later in the year 1827 she again writes to the same friend anent her play. This time to announce that : —

"I have *finished my play*. Last Monday, having in the morning achieved the termination of the fourth act, and finding that my father did not act on Tuesday, I resolved, if possible, to get it finished in order to read it to him on Tuesday evening. So on Monday evening at six o'clock I sat down to begin my fifth act, and by half past eleven had completed my task. . . . Even if it succeeds and is praised and admired, I shall never feel so happy as when my father greeted my entrance into the drawing-room with 'Is it done, my love? I shall be the happiest man alive if it succeeds!'"

Of this play, which its author entitled "*Francis I.*," she tells us that John Murray, the publisher, gave her four hundred and fifty pounds for it. "This generous price," she adds "(remuneration I dare not call it) obtained for me my brother's commission."

It was in the autumn of 1829 that the first definite indication of her career as an actress occurred. Previous to this indeed, she had confided to a friend the existence of some desire on her part to adopt the stage as a profession. The state of her father's affairs made it imperative that his children should, as far as possible, earn an independence for themselves. Two professions had, therefore, presented themselves to his daughter Fanny, namely, acting and governessing. Of the former she had written to her friend : —

"My father said the other day, 'There is a fine fortune to be made by any young woman of even decent talent on the stage now.' A fine fortune is a fine thing ; to be sure, there remains a rather material question to settle, that of 'even decent talent.' A passion for all beautiful poetry I am sure you will grant me ; and you would perhaps be inclined to take my father and mother's word for my dramatic capacity. . . . In some respects, no girl intending herself for this profession can have had better opportunities of acquiring just notions on the subject of acting . . . Nature

has certainly not been as favorable to me as might have been wished, if I am to embrace a calling where personal beauty, if not indispensable, is so great an advantage. But if the informing spirit be mine, it shall go hard, if with a face and voice as obedient to my emotions as mine are, I do not in some measure make up for the want of good looks. My father is now proprietor and manager of the theatre, and those certainly are favorable circumstances for my entering on a career which is one of great labor and some exposure, at the best, to a woman, and where a young girl cannot be too prudent herself, nor her protectors too careful of her. I hope I have not taken up this notion too hastily, and I have no fear of looking only on the bright side of the picture, for ours is a house where that is very seldom seen."

The common sense and sobriety expressed in the above are somewhat remarkable in a girl of the writer's age. But then and afterwards in an even accentuated degree Fanny Kemble's view of the stage as a profession for women in general, and as her own profession in particular, gave evidence of a gravity of judgment and sense of responsibility not commonly attributed to the members of that profession.

In spite of the foregoing correspondence, the question of the writer adopting the stage as a calling was not seriously discussed between her and her parents till two years later. Meantime, during a portion of those two years Fanny Kemble was living at Edinburgh with her cousin, Mrs. Henry Siddons. Her stay there seems to have made a peculiar impression upon the development of her character. Speaking of herself at the time, she says : —

"I was vehement and excitable, violently impulsive, and with a wild, irregular imagination. . . . A good fortune, for which I can never be sufficiently thankful, occurred to me at this time, in the very intimate intercourse which grew up just then between our family and that of my cousin, Mrs. Henry Siddons. . . . Mrs. Henry Siddons obtained my mother's consent that

I should go to Edinburgh to pay her a visit, which prolonged itself for a year — the happiest of my life. . . . Edinburgh at that time was still the small but important capital of Scotland instead of what railroads and modern progress have reduced it to, merely the largest town. Those were the days of the giants Scott, Wilson, Hogg, Jeffrey, Brougham, Sydney Smith, the Horners, Lord Murray, Allison, and all the formidable intellectual phalanx that held mental dominion over the English-speaking world, under the blue and yellow standard of the *Edinburgh Review*." At Edinburgh, moreover, a certain change in her regard of religious subjects took place. "From some cause or other," she writes, "my mind became much affected at this time by religious considerations, and a strong devotional element began to predominate among my emotions and cogitations." This change was perhaps more truly but a development of tendencies latent in her nature. She seems, indeed, to have always had what an eccentric clerical friend denominated as a "natural turn for religion." Not unnaturally, however, the feelings thus aroused were anything but favorable to a desire to go on the stage. At this time "my own former fancy for going on the stage had died away. . . . The turn I had exhibited for acting at school appeared to have evaporated, and Covent Garden itself never occurred to me as a great institution for purposes of art or enlightened public recreation, but only as my father's disastrous property to which his life was being sacrificed; and every thought connected with it gradually became more and more distasteful to me." That time modified to a great extent these views is beyond doubt, yet to the end and all through her dramatic career Fanny Kemble never experienced the utter absorption and delight in it which to the great actor is as the breath of life, while at no time was she, on her own showing, quite free from grave doubts as to the righteousness or expediency of the calling to which nevertheless, in the filial desire to help her parents, she had given herself. The

year 1829 saw the commencement of that career. She thus records the circumstances which led to her *début* at Covent Garden.

"In the autumn of 1829, my father being then absent on a professional tour in Ireland, my mother, coming in one day threw herself into a chair and burst into tears. 'It has come at last,' she said, 'our property is to be sold. I have seen that fine building all covered with bills of sale; the theatre must be closed, and I know not how many hundred poor people will be turned adrift without employment.' . . . I comforted my mother, and wrote a most urgent entreaty to my father to allow me to seek employment as a governess, and at once to relieve him of the burden of my maintenance. . . . Next day my mother asked me whether I seriously thought I had any real talent for the stage. . . . She begged me to learn some part and say it to her. 'I wish you would study Juliet for me.' So in the evening I stood up, and with indescribable trepidation repeated my first lesson in tragedy. . . . Three weeks from that time I was brought out. Not much time for preparation for such an experiment, but I had no more, to become acquainted with my fellow-actors, not one of whom I had ever spoken to, or seen, off the stage, before; to learn all the technical *business* of the stage, how to carry myself before the audience, how to concert my movements with the movements of those I was acting with, so as not to impede their efforts, while giving the greatest effect to my own. I do not wonder, when I remember this brief apprenticeship to my profession, that Mr. Macready once said I did not know the elements of it."

Subsequent events, however, proved Fanny Kemble's Juliet to have been one of the most brilliant successes of the English stage. Her costume for her *début* in this great part is worth recalling; it was:—

"Simply a dress of plain white satin with a long train with short sleeves and a low body; my hair was dressed in the fashion I usually wore it, a girdle of fine paste brilliants, and a small

comb of the same, which held up my hair were the only theatrical parts of the dress, which was as perfectly simple and as absolutely unlike anything Juliet ever wore as possible! . . . My frame of mind appears to me now curious enough. Though I had found out I could act, and that with a sort of frenzy of passion and entire self-forgetfulness, my going on the stage was absolutely an act of duty and conformity to the will of my parents, strengthened by my own conviction that I was bound to help them by every means in my power. The theatrical profession was, however, utterly distasteful to me, though *acting* itself was not, and every detail of my future vocation was more or less repugnant to me. Nor did custom ever render this aversion less; liking my work so little, it is wonderful to me that I ever achieved *any* success at all. The dramatic element inherent in my organization must have been very powerful to have enabled me without either study or love of my profession to do anything worth anything in it. Coming of a family of *real* artists, I have never felt that I deserved that honorable name."

But it is time to come to the actual circumstances of the first appearance, which she herself relates with much spirit as follows:—

"My mother, who had left the stage for upwards of twenty years, returned to it on the night of my first appearance, that I might have the comfort and support of her being with me in my trial. . . . My dear Aunt Dall, my maid, and the theatre dresser performed my toilet for me, and there I sat, ready for execution, with the palms of my hands convulsively pressed together, and the tears brimming slowly over down my rouged cheeks. At last 'Miss Kemble called for the stage, ma'am!' started me on my feet, and I was led round to the side scene opposite that from which I saw my mother advance on the stage, and while the uproar of reception filled me with terror, dear old Mrs. Davenport, and dear Mr. Keeley, and half the *dramatis personæ* of the play stood round me as I lay all but insensible in my aunt's arms. 'Never

mind 'em! Miss Kemble,' urged Keeley, 'don't think of 'em any more than if they were so many rows of cabbages!' 'Nurse!' called my mother, and on waddled Mrs. Davenport, and turning back, called 'Juliet!' My aunt gave me an impulse forward, and I ran straight across the stage, stunned with the tremendous shout that greeted me, my eyes covered with mist, and the green baize flooring of the stage feeling as if it rose up against my feet; but I got hold of my mother, and stood like a terrified creature at bay, confronting the huge theatre full of human beings. I do not think a word I uttered during the scene could have been audible; in the next, the ball-room, I began to forget myself; in the following one, the balcony scene, I had done so, and, for aught I knew, I was Juliet, the passion I was uttering sending hot waves of blushes all over my neck and shoulders, while the poetry sounded like music to me as I spoke it, with no consciousness of anything before me, utterly transported into the imaginary existence of the play. After this, I did not return into myself till all was over, and amid a tumultuous storm of applause, congratulation, tears, embraces, and a general joyous explosion of unutterable relief at the fortunate termination of my attempt, we went home. And so my life was determined, and I devoted myself to an avocation which I never liked or honored, and about the very nature of which I have never been able to come to any decided opinion." To this she adds: "When I saw the shop windows full of Sir Thomas Lawrence's sketch of me, and knew myself the subject of almost daily newspaper notices; when plates and saucers were brought to me with small figures of me as Juliet on them, when gentlemen showed me lovely buff-colored neck handkerchiefs which they had bought, and which had, as I thought, pretty lilac flowers all over them, which proved on nearer inspection to be minute copies of Lawrence's head of me,—I, not unnaturally, in the fulness of my experience, believed in my own success."

But Fanny Kemble was too clear

sighted and far too cognizant of all that is required and implied in the man or woman who is a *great* actor or actress to be finally deceived as to her own performance. No one more than herself recognized the truth of Harness's criticism, that "seeing Fanny Kemble act was exactly like looking at Mrs. Siddons through the diminishing end of an opera-glass," or the loss and gain to herself that the likeness to her great aunt entailed upon her. As a matter of fact, the wild *furor* with which London greeted her appearance as Juliet in 1829 was never equalled in her subsequent parts. Indeed, when in 1832 Covent Garden Theatre passed from the Kemble management, and Fanny Kemble came to America, the best days of her theatrical career may be said to have ended. The record of her triumph as an actress belongs to the record of her girlhood. It began and ended practically in Covent Garden Theatre, the theatre which, as she herself says, her uncle, John Kemble, built, where he and her aunt, Mrs. Siddons, took leave of the stage, and where she made her first entrance upon it.

ELLA MACMAHON.

From All The Year Round.
LANDSLIPS.

THE disaster which has fallen upon Sandgate, one of the quietest and pleasantest of watering-places on the South Coast, can hardly be matched in the annals of the past, as far as these islands are concerned. Earthquakes we have had, and more of them than any one would expect who has not studied the subject, and some even in the present century of a serious character, yet the damage caused by them has been slight, compared with the wreck of the charming little town on the Kentish coast. Indeed, such a landslip, although more limited in range, is more destructive in its effects than an ordinary earthquake shock, which gives people a shake-up, but leaves them practically where they were. But the landslip carries away foundations, su-

perstructures, gardens, shrubs, and trees, involving everything in one common ruin.

Traces of enormous landslips are not uncommon as features in a landscape, and the agencies at work in levelling the hills and filling up the valleys occasionally give proof of their activity in a very startling manner. It was a tremendous slide of earth that formed the sheltered and romantic district of the Undercliff in the Isle of Wight at some remote period, and in many places round about our coasts, and even in inland districts, are the evidences of extensive movements of the earth in the nature of landslips. But the historic record of such events is very imperfect, and can only be pieced out with fragments. Yet sundry catastrophes of a like character may be recalled, with the common feature of ruin and destruction brought upon people in a way they could not have anticipated or have guarded against by any efforts of their own.

Not exactly a landslip, and yet hardly to be otherwise described, was the curious occurrence in 1668, recorded in the "Philosophical Transactions," by which the parish of Downham, in Suffolk, was overwhelmed and almost destroyed. The surface of a great area of sandy waste, becoming loosened by the action of continuous south-westerly gales, was driven bodily upon the cultivated soil, destroying the corn-lands and driving into the little town; "where it hath buried and destroyed divers houses, and hath forced people to preserve the remainder at a greater cost than they were worth." The other end of the town was even in worse plight, for there many houses were overthrown and buried, and their pastures and meadows destroyed.

Another and an amphibious kind of calamity, neither landslip nor inundation, but partaking of the nature of both, was the bursting of Solway Moss in 1771, when a half-solid flood of peat and bog was poured over the fertile valley in its track. A farmer whose house was destroyed and who had to fly for his life before the advancing wall

of mud, declared that his first thought was that his dunghill had broken loose and was advancing against him. Anyhow the torrent covered six hundred acres of good arable land and destroyed sixty or seventy houses, although, thanks to the sluggish nature of the invading mixture, no human lives were sacrificed, but of cattle and sheep the loss was great.

Here is the contemporary account of an unmistakable landslip on a large scale, which occurred in 1793 near the village of Colebrook, now a great centre of ironworks and blast furnaces, but then a thoroughly rural, secluded spot. The scene was a pleasant slope above the river Severn, where a family dwelt in a farmhouse, about five thousand yards distant from the river.

"The man of the house got up about three o'clock in the morning—the season was towards the end of May—but when going to his work, he heard a strange, rumbling noise, and felt the ground shake under him, whereupon he roused up all his family. They perceived the ground begin to move, but knew not which way to run. However, they providentially and wonderfully escaped by taking an immediate flight, for just as they got to an adjacent wood, the ground they had left separated from that on which they stood. They first observed a small crack in the ground, about four or five inches wide and a field that was sown with oats, to heave up and roll about like waves of water; the trees moved as if blown with the wind, but the air was calm and serene. The Severn, in which at that time was a considerable flood, was agitated very much, and the current seemed to run upwards. They perceived a great crack run very quick up the ground from the river. Immediately about thirty acres of land, with the hedges and trees standing, except a few that were overturned, moved, with great force and swiftness, towards the Severn, attended with great and uncommon noise, compared to a large flock of sheep running swiftly. That part of the land next the river was a small wood, in which grew twenty large oaks. The wood was

pushed with such velocity into the Severn that it forced the water up in columns a considerable height, like mighty fountains, and drove the bed of the river before it. The current being instantly stopped, occasioned a great inundation above, and so sudden a fall below, that many fish were left on dry land, and many barges were heeled over, and when the stream came down were sunk. The river soon took its course over a large meadow, and in three days wore a navigable channel there. Less than a quarter of an hour completed this dreadful scene."

A similar catastrophe had occurred in 1764 at Aston, Gloucester, where a mass of earth sixteen acres in extent, and twenty or thirty feet in depth, slid down from the side of Bredon Hill, burying the neighboring pastures, and covering up trees, bushes, fences, and all signs of cultivation under the *débris*.

A landslip of the same nature as the Colebrook disaster occurred on the sixteenth of April, 1793, when a large plot of ground many acres in extent moved off from its own proper moorings in the parish of Fownhope, in Herefordshire, near the river Wye, and with trees and buildings all standing, slid bodily down into the bed of the river, suddenly diverting its course, and causing much loss and damage.

All these disasters seem to have followed a season of heavy and continuous rains, and the last year of the eighteenth century was marked by extraordinary and long-continued rains, causing floods and inundations in all directions, and bringing about many minor landslips. Of these the most noticeable was the opening of a huge chasm in Bredon Hill, a noted summit lying on the borders of the counties of Gloucester and Worcester. The southern slope of Bredon was the scene of a landslip already noted, while the more precipitous escarpment towards Worcestershire now seems to have split into a great fissure.

Again, in 1804, on the fourth of May, a violent storm of rain and wind was accompanied by the fall of "a vast body of earth from Beechen Cliffs, near Bath, with hideous ruin and combustion;" a

thicket of trees and bushes being precipitated into the road below, a movement which suggested to observers of a literary turn the progress of Birnam Wood to Dunsinane. Another serious landslip is recorded in 1816, the scene being in Norway, at Tiller, near Drontheim, where about one hundred and twenty acres of land, with a depth of sixty feet, slipped into the river Nid, near Store Foss. The month was March, more fruitful in such disasters than any other, but although there had been heavy rains previously, a hard frost prevailed at the time of the disaster. The church, the bridge, and farmhouse disappeared, the farmer was killed in trying to rescue his children, and some eighteen others lost their lives either in the landslip or the inundation that followed. Four years later, in 1820, according to the "Annual Register," "the German papers mention that the village of Strau, in Bohemia, situated on a sandhill, was lately swallowed up during the night by the sinking of the hill, whose base had been undermined by the passage of subterranean waters." All the inhabitants escaped, but hardly a trace remained of the once smiling village.

The gigantic catastrophes recorded from time to time in Alpine regions, the destruction wrought by avalanches or the disruption of glaciers, and the fall of mountains, do not come within our scope. It will be sufficient to mention the fall of the Rossberg mountain behind the Righi in Switzerland in 1806, with great destruction of villages and hamlets and the loss of five hundred lives, and the comparatively recent destruction of Elm, canton of Glarus, where one hundred and fifty inhabitants perished. And the disaster in July last, at St. Gervais, in French Savoy, in which villages and a great hotel were destroyed, with many human victims, will be freshly remembered.

On a much smaller scale is our next catastrophe, but it is nearer home, and its interest is heightened by its connection with the early days of the gifted author of "Jane Eyre." "At Ha-

worth, in Yorkshire," says the laconic chronicle of the event, "the highlands on Stanbury Moor opened into a chasm forming cavities two hundred and six hundred yards in circumference, from which issued two torrents of mud and water, breaking down bridges and overthrowing cottages in their progress. The river Aire was poisoned as far as Leeds, and all the fish destroyed." Now at that time the Rev. Patrick Brontë was perpetual curate of Haworth, a widower with a young family, the eldest, Charlotte, being then eight years old. Mr. Brontë was an eye-witness of the disaster, and improved the occasion in a sermon to his parishioners which was printed, together with a poem he wrote upon the occasion, and was reprinted in 1885 by R. Brown, Haworth. The preacher describes his own feelings of alarm, heightened by the belief that his children were actually on the scene of the portentous outbreak. "I had sent my little children . . . to take an airing on the common. They stayed longer than I expected. . . . I went to an upper window to look for their return. The heavens over the moors were blackening fast. . . . I heard a deep distant explosion resembling, yet differing from thunder, and I perceived a gentle tremor in the chamber." The children, as it turned out, had gained a place of safety and shelter before the disaster occurred, which would have been indeed calamitous had it swallowed up "Jane Eyre." Mr. Brontë's poem, by the way, is not without its vigorous passages:—

But, see! the solid ground like ocean driven
With mighty force by the four winds of
heaven,
In strange commotion rolls its earthy tide!

In 1828, on the fourth of March, there occurred a serious landslip and fall of cliff at Hastings, "a quarter of a mile east of the town, just beyond the east well." In April, 1829, there was a considerable slip and fall of rock at Nottingham. The town is built on sandstone rock, which here and there crops up among houses and gardens, in curious and romantic fashion. Shel-

tered by a wall of rock, a row of cottages, and a public-house called The Loggerheads, had stood in safety for generations; but one fine morning the wall slid down and toppled over, and there was an end of the dwellings in question. All the inmates saved themselves; but among the *débris* the coat-tails of a victim were seen protruding. They belonged to a young man who had been passing at the time, and who was dug out insensible, but who eventually recovered.

A really terrible landslide was that of 1839, on Christmas eve, on the coast of Devon, at a place called Pinney, near Lyme Regis, when three-quarters of a mile of cliff, with fields, houses, trees, and gardens, fell into ruins. Cottagers who had been making merry with distant friends on Christmas eve, returned to find that not a vestige of their homes remained, nor of the place where they had stood; all had disappeared in a vast chasm three hundred feet wide and one hundred and fifty feet deep. Another landslide of smaller extent occurred in the same region in the following year.

A landslide on the cliffs between Brighton and Rottingdean, in 1843, carried with it two men who were walking along the heights, and they fell with the falling cliff to a depth of a hundred feet. One man was killed, the other escaped with a few bruises. In the following year, after a wet winter, some three acres of rock and earth, with forty well-grown oak-trees, slid down Dudnor's Hill, at Dormington, in Herefordshire, for a distance of two hundred yards, then all came to a stand on the margin of the river Frome.

The Holmfirth disaster of 1852, which involved the loss of a hundred lives, and destroyed property to the amount of six hundred thousand pounds, was caused by the bursting of a reservoir, and does not come within our category, and when railway embankments give way, the occurrence is to be classed rather as an engineering disaster than as in the range of natural phenomena. But a heavy fall of chalk in Abbot's Cliff tunnel in January, 1877, followed

next day by a serious landslide on the line near Dover, was due rather to natural causes than to any defect in construction. But all traffic between Folkestone and Dover was suspended for several weeks, and omnibuses took the passengers from one place to the other. Later in the same year a curious incident occurred at Camborne, in Cornwall, where the local volunteers had just been dismissed from a full parade on their own ground, when just after the last men had marched off, the whole parade ground disappeared with a terrible noise, and in its place opened out a horrible chasm, one hundred and fifty yards wide, and six hundred feet deep. Presumably the fall was caused by the breaking in of the roof of some abandoned mine, and, doubtless, the measured tramp of the volunteers on the surface had been the immediate cause of the slip.

The district of chalk and sand, with its bold cliffs and romantic fissures, which give such a charm to the Kentish coast, is not without its experiences of landslips. At one time or other the old Roman station, *Portus Lemanis*, known in the neighborhood as Studfall Castle, must have experienced a fatal landslide in which were buried half its walls and towers, perhaps choking the river-bed and sending it round by a distant course. But coming to times less remote, yet so long ago as 1801, when Sandgate Castle was mounted with guns, and might expect at any time to exchange a shot with a French frigate or privateer, there happened in that year, on the eighth of March, a downfall thus recorded by the chronicler of the period:—

"An immense portion of that stupendous eminence, the cliff bordering the sea between Folkestone and Sandgate, at about a quarter of a mile from the former, suddenly gave way and was precipitated below with great violence, and several smaller fragments have continued falling at various times. The footpath from Sandgate to Folkestone went across the part destroyed, but happily nobody was passing at the time." And on the other side of Folke-

stone, a new road which had been laid out not many years ago towards the romantic chasm called the Warren, was by some movement of the earth, altogether crumpled up and destroyed.

But the recent landslide at Sandgate is unexampled in the greatness of its effects. On a barren hillside the earth-slide would not have been of much consequence, but coming upon a thriving little town and utterly dismantling and ruining the best part of it, the disaster becomes something terrible, especially to those who, like the greater part of mankind, can only make both ends meet with extreme difficulty. Three-quarters of a mile of sea-front drawn forward like a strip of carpet, and crumpling up and breaking everything it brings with it, terrace, streets, villas, forms a disaster of such proportions that only national aid can repair what is really a national calamity. There was nothing about Sandgate to suggest the danger of such a catastrophe. The town had grown and increased, and had become a picture of brightness and verdure, but it was no latter-day watering-place, got up by speculators and builders. When Folkestone was, if not a fuzzy down, yet a very small and fishy town with a silted-up harbor, and narrow streets festooned with dry dabs, Sandgate was a neat little watering-place, not much known to Londoners, but the resort of gentle and simple from the county of Kent. To place little Sandgate in a way to regain its former state of quiet prosperity and independence, is a matter surely not beyond the resources of this great and wealthy country. There is a feeling, too, among the people of the neighborhood, that the action of the Trinity Board in blowing up with heavy charges of dynamite the wrecks of the *Calypso* and the *Benvenue* in the bay before the town, was at all events contributory to the disaster. The earth-waves caused by heavy explosions travel far and have a powerful influence on surrounding strata, and the official dynamiting may have started a landslide which might otherwise not have come off for another hundred years, and perhaps not even then.

From Chambers' Journal.
SAFED.

THE city of Safed is picturesquely situated high on the mountains of Naphtali. "Ras-el-Jeff" is a name common among the natives (the head of Galilee). It is the highest city in the land, being twenty-seven hundred feet above the Mediterranean, and thirty-three hundred and eighty feet above the Sea of Galilee. The castle-hill is the highest point to westward of the range of hills lying between the Jordan Valley and the Wadies Leimûn and 'Amûd. It is almost severed from its fellows by the Wady Hamra, where gardens are always green, watered by perennial springs. Of the once noble castle nothing remains but a confused heap, visible from afar. The city is built around this hill in the form of a horseshoe, open to the north, spreading a little up the hill beyond the wady to the east; the "toe" peering over a little mound southward, whence the whole extent of the Sea of Galilee is seen.

The view from the castle-hill is wide and varied, although not so extensive as that from the neighboring height of Jebel Canaan. The road to Damascus winds through olive groves north-eastwards, and disappears between two rounded grassy hills that guard the descent to the Waters of Merom. On the hillside to the left two little hamlets, 'Ain Bireh and 'Ain-*ez-Zaitûn*, are huddled closely together beside the springs from which their names are taken, whose tiny silver streams glide under the shadow of fig, pomegranate, and vine that clothe the cultivated slopes below.

The mud walls of many villages marking the sites of ancient Galilean cities stud the landscape to the north and north-west. The old fortress of Gischala is only just hidden by the shoulder of a hill. Over against us to the west is the Jermûk range, cut off from the Safed hills by Wady Leimûn, or, as it is sometimes called, "Wady-el-Tawahn" (Valley of Mills), from the number of primitive mills with ivy-covered walls in the midst of brambly

thickets, driven by the water which flows all the year round in the bottom of the gorge. The rocky, precipitous sides are in some parts not less than fifteen hundred feet in height. Deep in the bosom of the valley is a curious intermittent spring, a constant source of wonderment to the natives, who call it the "well of the demons."

Jebel Jermûk, a finely shaped mountain, the most northerly point of the range of that name, is the highest in Palestine, rising to a height of four thousand feet. On the gentle slope at its western base stands the ancient synagogue of Meiron, a sanctuary and place of pilgrimage to pious Jews all over the world. Strange tales are told of their doings at the great festival called the "feast of the burning," which is held here annually. It has been attempted to identify this place with the Meroz so bitterly mentioned in the song of Deborah. Tabor appears like a great dark beehive sitting at the corner of the magnificent plain of Esdraelon, which, beyond the uplands of Nazareth, stretches away to the base of Mount Carmel by the sea. Little Hermon, with the white-walled church on its north-western slope, marking the site of Nain; Gilboa, of tragic memory; and the mountains of Samaria beyond; Ebal and Gerizim raising their proud shoulders above their fellows, as if to boast of their ancient fame, are all visible from where we stand. From no point are the blue waters of Galilee seen to greater advantage. Deep set among surrounding hills, when spring throws her mantle of dazzling green over the land, it is a veritable "sapphire in the midst of emeralds." The curiously arranged hills of Jaulân, volcanoes of the antique world, whose fires have been quenched for ages, lie eastward like huge, dark masses rolled down from the majestic sides of Great Hermon. Beyond them we see the far-stretching plains of Haurân, the wealth of whose soil is not yet known to this generation, the giant forms of the Haurân mountains—Jebel-ed-Druse—looming up on the edge of the desert some eighty miles away. To the south-

east lie the beautifully rounded, thickly wooded hills of Gilead, yielding pasture and shelter to the flocks as of old; and when the air is perfectly clear, the grim heights of the mountains of Moab may be seen touching the sky away in the south.

The high and isolated position of Safed renders it comparatively secure from epidemics, notwithstanding the insanitary conditions that prevail. It is the most populous city in northern Palestine; but anything like accuracy in estimating the numbers in this country is impossible. Of Moslems there may be from five to six thousand; Christians, between two and three hundred; Jews, from twelve to fifteen thousand. Two influences, acting in opposite directions, affect the calculation of the Jews. The census is given in by heads of communities, who are always more or less open to corruption. The returns made to the religious heads are sure to be as large as possible—that is, as large as they can with decency be made. The pious contributors of alms for the support of the *holy* Jews in Palestine regulate their subscriptions to some extent by the numbers to whom relief is to be given. If the numbers can be increased a little, there will be all the more for the *bonâ fide* recipients. Scrupulousness in securing advantage has not been a distinguishing mark of the race since the day on which the artful Jacob deceived poor blind old Isaac. On the other hand, a tax is levied by the government on all Ottoman subjects, at so much per head of population. The same interest which in the former case leads to increase, in this prompts to diminish the returns; the result, of course, is that there are no reliable statistics. The figures given may be taken as a fair approximation.

Education is at a low ebb. Education, properly so called, has indeed, until recently, been beyond the reach of the inhabitants. Among the Jews, the ability to read Hebrew, whether understanding it or not, is common enough, and many of them can write and reckon sufficiently to be able to manage a little

shop; but there education stops. Only a few who have been out in the world on begging expeditions have any general information, and this they are by no means desirous to impart. Judaism resembles Romanism very closely in the manner in which the knowing ones try to keep the common people in ignorance. Among the Arabs, again, outside the government circles, men who can read and write to any purpose are as scarce as snowdrifts in Palestine. The soil, which has been so little disturbed by cultivation, and is so thinly sown with wheat, affords magnificent opportunities for the growth of weeds and thistles. Weeds and thistles there are in abundance. The minds of Jew and Gentile are dominated by superstition. Their religious observances are cherished in proportion as they derive their sanction from superstition. This accounts largely for the bitterness of their bigotry. Many are the strange customs to which these people yield willing homage; what follows is a fair example.

The night of July 12, 1889, I spent in Safed. The moon rose with all her Syrian splendor, revealing beauties in the landscape unsuspected under the fierce glare of the sun. We watched her slow ascent into the cloudless heavens, and amused ourselves a while trying to identify places around, wrapped in the clear amber of her beams. We had not long retired, when a loud crash resounded through the still night air, followed by the clang of drums and an indescribable mixture of noises, increasing in volume every moment, produced by clashing tin cans and crockery, thumping upon boards with great sticks, firing of guns, the hoarse shoutings of men, the piercing voices of children, and, high above all, the shrill cry of the women—a peculiar cry, uttered in times of great excitement, whether of joy, of sorrow, or of anxiety. The din grew thicker, and the swelling sound floated away over intervening valleys, to echo among the moonlit hills, as one part of the city after another awoke to the seriousness of the occasion, to contribute its share

to the general uproar and confusion. We came forth in haste to learn the cause of the alarm. The streets below us were filled by a wildly gesticulating mob, howling fiercely, with eyes of flame directed to the moon. Instinctively we looked towards the pale queen of night, and saw a little black notch, as it were, cut out of her bright circle. As I listened intently, by and by from the babel below I was able to distinguish clearly the words, shouted over and over again by every member of the crowd, with every variety of emphasis: "Ya hoot dasher kamarna! Ya hoot, minshan Ullah, dasher kamarna, ahsan ma natla' lak binnaboot!" Which may be rendered: "O whale, let go our Moon! O whale, for Ullah's sake, let go our moon, or else we'll come up to you with a club!" The look of terror on the faces of many showed that they only too firmly believed what the words indicated. Nothing was more certain to them than that a great whale from the vasty deep had risen from the dark waters to wipe out the glory of the night by making a supper of the moon. Children cry for the moon; but he had already gripped it in his awful jaws! Their only hope of saving her lay in their power to give the whale such a fright, that in trembling he should let fall his prey and flee for his own life.

As time passed and the dark shadow spread more and more over the face of the moon, their excitement grew almost to frenzy. The whale did not seem to care for their threats, and soon their beautiful moon would be gone beyond recall! Full three-quarters of the golden disc were obscured ere the shadow began to move off. Then gradually a jubilant note rose from amid the clangor. The shouting and the crashing and the clashing waxed merrier, as if a great weight were being lifted from the minds of the mob. They rushed hither and thither with quickening pace, hallooing, and vapping their clubs; ere long the voice of laughter was heard, and at last, amid a burst of shouting, clashing of metal and staves, accompanied by a discharge of mus-

ketry that made the mountains echo again, the shadow passed from the rim, and the moon swam away gloriously in the translucent air. The crowd speedily left the streets ; and soon the defenders of the moon were seen stretching themselves on their rugs on the roofs, each one perfectly satisfied that in rescuing their beloved moon from the jaws of the whale he had well earned a night's repose.

A native gentleman of more than average intelligence had joined us while we watched the strange scene. I asked how the custom could have risen. He told me that "once upon a time" a famous astronomer resided at the court of a certain great king. He was a wise man, and as such honored of king and people. A man who has knowledge of "the stars in their courses" is held to be wise in things far beyond the ken of ordinary mortals. His counsel was sought in affairs of the highest importance ; and his skill in meeting difficulties and in giving suitable advice, combined with his well-known probity, secured for him not only the admiration but the confidence of all. From his observation of the movements of the heavenly bodies, he had calculated that on a given date there would be an eclipse of the moon. In a moment of unhappy inspiration he told the king what would take place. The king, like so many children of the Orient, was superstitious to a degree. He did not doubt that some potent evil spell had fallen upon his long-trusted friend ; and that, were he left free, he would by his enchantments produce the effects he had prophesied, and perhaps blot the moon out of the heavens. Repressing all sentiments as Eastern tyrants so easily can, he ordered his quondam counsellor to be put fast in prison and kept there until the time should pass and the event declare whether or not he had spoken honestly. The astronomer went to prison, but waited confidently the hour and the event that should set him free. At length the

appointed night came, and exactly at the hour indicated by the astronomer a bit seemed taken out of the moon. But, alas ! the king slept ; for any one to awaken him it would be certain death ; if he did not see the eclipse, there would be no escape for the astronomer. Anxiety gave way to anguish as the shadow spread, covering almost the entire disc, and still the king slept. Suddenly rousing himself, the prisoner declared to his custodians that a great whale had come from the distant floods to swallow the moon, that unless the people made a fearful noise and frightened him away, they would never see their moon again. At once there arose on every hand a confused noise, and mingling of loud, discordant voices such as had never been heard in the city before. As the sly astronomer had intended, it penetrated to the ear of the sleeping monarch, who forthwith strode out to learn the cause. With his distressed subjects he looked at the moon, and lo ! it had happened according to the words of the wise man. He sent messengers hastily to the prison to fetch him forth ; and when the moon escaped from the shadow and soared in beauty once more amid the blue, she looked down upon the astronomer restored to his honors, his royal master seeking by all means to efface from his worthy counsellor's mind every trace of his recent humiliation.

To the populace it was unnecessary to give further explanation ; hence the belief so prevalent even up to the present time, that in the gloomy twilight of the unfathomable abyss there is a fearful monster, who, consumed with a desire to devour the moon, is ever ready for an opportunity to pounce upon it. An eclipse is simply an attempt on his part to give effect to his desire—an attempt in which he fails, simply because he is so well watched and shouted at and threatened that his courage fails him just when success is touched !

